



THE NORTH SHORE WATCH AND OTHER POEMS

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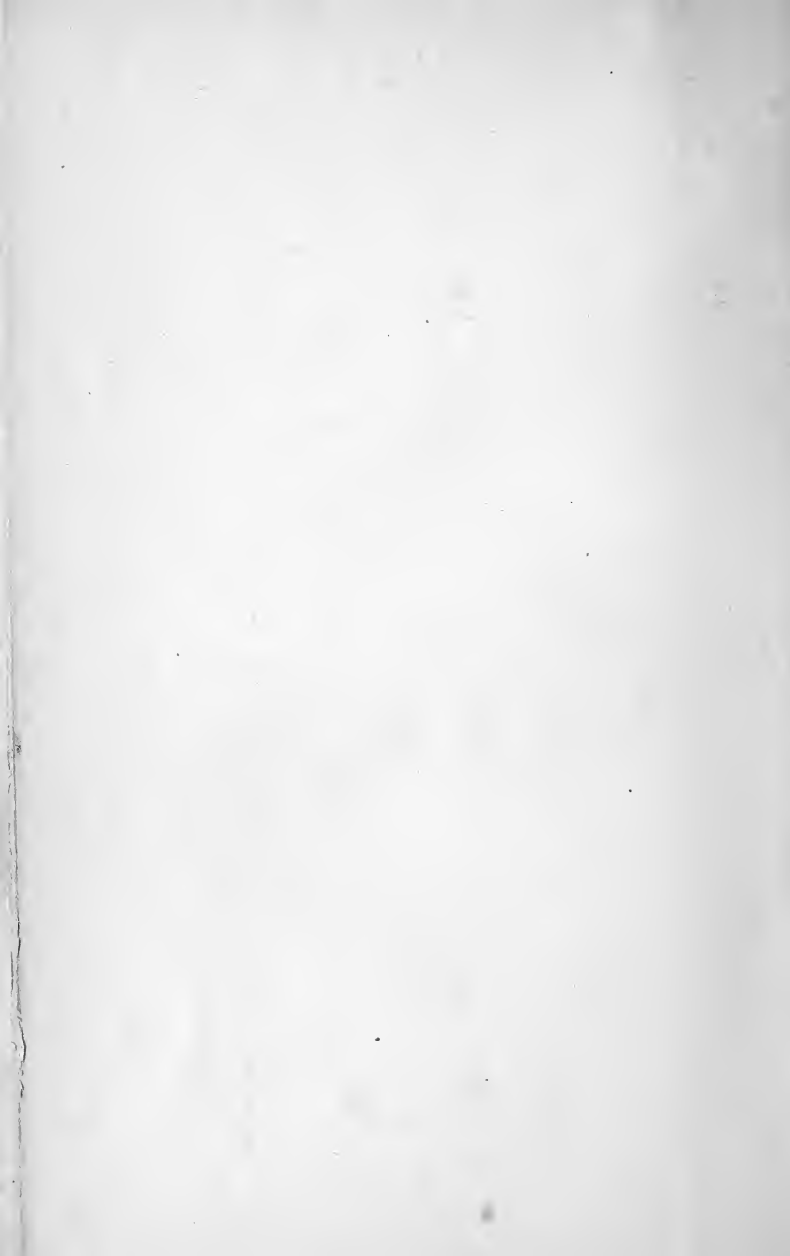
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By Mr. Woodberry.

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THE NORTH SHORE WATCH

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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THE NORTH SHORE WATCH

CLARENCE LAIGHTON DENNETT

SEPTEMBER 6, 1854—JUNE 5, 1878

THE NORTH SHORE WATCH

I.

FIRST dead of all my dead that are to be,

Who at life's flush with me wast wont to
roam

The pine-fringed borders of this surging sea,

From far and lonely lands Love brings me
home

To this wide water's foam ;

Here thou art fallen in thy joyful days,

Life quenched within thy breast, light in thy
eyes ;

And darkly from thy ruined beauty rise

These flowerless myrtle-sprays ;

The hills we trod enfold thee evermore,

The gray and sleepless sea breaks round the or-
phaned shore.

II.

All things are lovely as they were, and still
They draw with gladness toward me as a
friend ;
The evening star doth touch me with the thrill
Of welcome, and the waves their voices
blend
To hail my exile's end.
Oft while I wandered in those weary lands,
This dear-remembered shore would comfort
me,
Seeing in thought the everlasting sea
Washing his yellow sands ;
But now the scene I longed for gives me pain
Since he is dead, and ne'er shall feel its joy
again.

III.

Still planet, making beautiful the west,
Bright bringer of the stars and sheltered
sleep,
Easing our hearts, as some beloved guest,
Whom for a little while our eyes may keep,
And through long years shall weep ;
O eloquent with flashes to the soul,
Even as his eyes beneath thy pure empire
Beamed the mute music of the heart's desire,
Thee, too, doth fate control ;
And brief as his thy hour of light must be —
To earth her starry hush, my solitude to me !

IV.

Yet here our dayspring long ago was born,
While heaven still hovered near earth's
dusky frame ;
Light touched the isles, and joyously the morn
O'erflowed the orient with prophetic flame,
And on the waters came,
Crimson and pearl, and woke the singing shore ;
On over murmuring waves the glad light
swept ;
On through the west the loosened glory leapt
The far blue uplands o'er ;
And slowly rose the sun, and made the sea
White with his splendor, and filled heaven with
purity.

V.

Upon this beach we welcomed in the world,
And loved the lore of its wise solitude,
Where on the foaming sands the surges swirled,
Or broad, blue-belted calm, in blessed brood,
Lay many a shining rood ;
Here in that prime we kept our boyish tryst,
When woke our April and the need to rove ;
We trod the mantle that the white moon wove,
We pierced the star-looped mist ;
And ever where our eager feet might roam,
The air was morning, and the loneliest spot was
home.

VI.

The eloquent voices of the yearning sea
 Called to us, strong as syllables of fate,
And, wafting in, like some lost memory,
 Subdued us to the haunting hopes that wait
 Round boyhood's rapt estate ;
The deep spell moved, a passion in our blood,
 And made the throbbing of our hearts keep
 time
 Unto the laughter of the waves, and chime
 With thunders of the flood ;
And subtly as a dream takes hue and form,
Our spirits clothed their youth in ocean's sun
 and storm.

VII.

Still would we watch, wave-borne from dawn
 to dark,
 The pools of opal gem the windless bay ;
Or touch at eve the purple isles, and mark
 Where, by the moon, far on the edge of day,
 The shore's pale crescent lay ;
Or up broad river-reaches are we gone,
 Through sunset mirrored in the hollow tide —
 In beauty sphered, as some lone bird enskied,
 The halcyon boat drifts on,
 To twilight, and the stars, and deepest night,
With phosphorescent gleams, and dark oars drop-
 ping light.

VIII.

Ah, then a presence moved within this deep,
That more than beauty made its regions dear ;
O'er the long levels of its golden sleep
The light that beams from the eternal year
Flashed on the spirit clear ;
And wheresoe'er we saw the ocean roll,
With sounds of harmony his waves among,
The song that breathed before the lyre was
strung
Gave echo to the soul ;
And tremulous the immortal instincts woke
That prophesy of Him in whom the sweet dawn
broke.

IX.

Alas, the faëry light that truth once wore !
Alas, the easy questing of the heart !
When, by the hushed and visionary shore,
The dreaming hope, wherein all things have
part,
Made our young pulses start !
Once, once I knew thy sweetness, O salt sea !
I reaped along thy furrows bearded grain ;
Thy groves, that never drink the sun nor rain,
Gave nectarous fruit to me ;
And all thy herbless pastures yielded wine,
Deep-hearted, fragrant, bright — ah, then his
hand clasped mine !

X.

Ay, heart with heart companioned we went on,
And ever lovelier was the wooded shore ;
More joyous bloomed the May, and warmer
shone
The slant light down the forest's muffled floor,
With music vaulted o'er ;
Ah, when the bluebird through the meadows
darts,
Still yellow dogtooths gleam amid the brakes,
And fearlessly on all the green-leaved lakes
Lilies unfold their hearts ;
Earth's children slumber when the wild winds
rise —
The tempest passes o'er, and heaven looks through
their eyes.

XI.

But the dark pines, whose heart is like the sea's,
Mourn for one darling flower they nurtured
here,
With morning fed, and deep, deep harmonies —
The sweetest blossom that the windy year
E'er rifled and left sere ;
Wake, O ye violets preluding the May,
And many a barren slope for beauty win !
Burst, O white laurels, flush your cups within,
And whisper, spray to spray !
But till the cypress buds, and blooms the yew,
The sylvan year brings not the love that once ye
knew.

XII.

Too swiftly fled the green and fragrant time !
Bleak on the vacant earth the North Wind
fell,
Bitter and fierce, to beat the frozen clime,
In shriveled fields and ruined woods to dwell,
And on the flood's black swell ;
But us the rude transformer could not change ;
We saw his pale dominions gleam afar,
His keen skies flash with many a friendlier
star,
And, lo, the vision strange —
Dear to our faith — far in the alien north,
With faltering hues and faint, a dream of morn
stole forth.

XIII.

Such presages before us ever went,
And flushed the skies with joyful heraldings ;
We trusted beauty — 't is the element
Wherein the soul unfolds her poisoning wings,
And heavenward soars, and sings ;
But in the dawn and by the star-swept tides,
In dim melodious aisles of lonely pines,
We felt the heart of sorrow none divines,
That in all things abides ;
And borne on sighing winds came sounds of
woe,
Whose burden well we knew, but he feared not to
know.

XIV.

I saw the beauty of the early world
More lovely imaged in his lucid mind ;
Pure at his heart of innocence impearled
Shone the white truth no search can ever find,
In love, as light, enshrined ;
Him nature folded childlike to her breast,
Gave him her peace, her strength, her ease,
her joy ;
Fate could not move him, doubt could not
annoy,
Nor sorrow, all men's guest ;
And woven of her music fell his voice
On the wide-glimmering eve, and bade my soul
rejoice.

XV.

"Ere yet we knew Love's name," he said to me,
"He gave the new earth to our boyish hands ;
For us morn blossoms, and the azure sea
Ruffles and smooths his long and gleaming
sands
Upon a hundred strands ;
In green and gold the radiant mist exhales,
When through the willow buds the blue
March blows,
And sowing Persia through the world the rose
Reddens our western vales :
Clasped with the light, bathed with the glowing
air,
Rest we in his embrace who made our paths so
fair !

XVI.

“ Why fear we ? wherefore doubt ? is Love not
strong,
Whose starry shield o’er-roofs our mortal
way,
Who makes his home within our hearts lifelong,
An instinct to divine, a law to sway,
A hero’s faith to stay ?
See, all life beats responsive to his might ;
Its yearning in his tameless hope began ;
Its dawning triumph in the heart of man
Is his far-beaconing light ;
He builds the empire of the golden years ;
The red strife, too, is his, the field of blood and
tears.

XVII.

“ Through Him we look toward life with con-
quering eyes,
Nor swerve, nor falter, though his fire must
blend
With our young hearts as flame with sacrifice,
Consuming all we are for that great end
He bids our souls befriend ;
The laws invincible of his firm state
Work with us till the vision grows the fact,
And thought, slow-suppling into perfect act,
Makes our desire our fate ;
Nor elsewise unto truth may man attain,
Though built in Shelley’s heart, though orbéd in
Shakespeare’s brain.

XVIII.

“ His are we, as we were before we saw
The murder-strife that ravin cannot sate,
The fierce, incessant moan, the strokes of
law,
The deep betrayal of our birth and state
That baffles us with fate ;
Be life’s inevitable sadness ours,
The evil that we cannot help but will,
The good with viewless consequence in ill,
Our maimed and thwarted powers !
Nor yet ” — I hear him say — “ repining
know,
The shadow-clouded earth through the blue deep
must go.

XIX.

“ It moves, and plunges to the central sun,
Its paltry ruin flashes, and is gone ;
The stars, indifferent, their calm courses run,
The constellations shine as erst they shone,
The clustered heavens go on ;
Who shall foresee of all the one blind doom
When darkness shall inhabit torpid space,
Still, starless, orphaned of dawn’s lovely
face,
Unfathomable tomb ! —
Yet may the soul pitch her adventure high,
With beauty and with love impassioned, though
we die.

XX.

“Beauty that sings of unisons unseen,
Bright emanation of consenting laws,
In flower, wave, shell, blue skies, and pastures
green,
The passing of the power that hath no
pause,
That knows nor fate nor cause ;
The thrill of life aye pulsing through the void,
With rhythmic motions felt in sun and star,
And galaxies of splendor streaming far,
Nor in their woe destroyed ;
The presence wonderful, beneath, above —
In the lone heart of man it wakes, incarnate
Love.

XXI.

“It hallows all, the aureole He wears
Whom frail mortality hath never bound ;
Who in his hands the burning sphere upbears,
Though stars grow gray, their dateless ruin
found,
And perish in their round ;
He is — and, lo, 't is loveliness we see,
The heavens majestic, and the joyous earth ;
Is not — and all the glory and the mirth
Are things of memory ;
Long, long o'er us be his divine control —
The beauty of the world, the rapture of the
soul ! ”

XXII.

Such musings ours upon the moonlit shore,
While dark with motion sways the luminous
tide ;
On come the long, black waves, and, whitening
o'er,
Fall, far-resounding, eddy, and divide,
And up the smooth sands glide :
So, life-engirdling, shone eternal truth,
So darkly luminous, so swift, so strong,
Flooding our mortal brink, it broke along
The winding shores of youth ;
There silent, glad, in Love's repose we lay —
Calm was among the stars, peace on the heaving
bay.

XXIII.

Oh, wherefore could we not forever dwell
In that seclusion of the world new-born,
Where on our passive youth the promise fell
That dawns beneath the sweet brows of the
morn,
The light none lives to scorn !
Too soon we left the haunts of boyish thought ;
Moored swung the boat beside the shining
sea ;
The arethusas flowered in secrecy,
And fell, unloved, unsought ;
Lone the rare cardinal, autumn's herald, stood ;
The bittersweet gleamed red in the deserted wood.

XXIV.

One watch was ours ; far o'er the ebbing sea,
Heavy and dark, the rainy shadows lay ;
From his familiar door he walked with me
To that broad hill, grown dear in boyhood's
day,
The old field-trodden way ;
Chill rose the mists, and faint the distant roar
Of ocean sounded ; our old seat we took
Silent and sad ; cold autumn's dying look
The summer landscape wore ;
We minded not — in our hearts shadows were
The wide earth harbors not, housing their misery
there.

XXV.

The Hour sprang forth from universal time,
Of his joy-hearted race the last sad Hour ;
Crowned heir of all his brothers of the prime,
Bodied more nobly, girt with secret power,
Starred with Love's passion flower ;
Through night he sprang, and black the flakes
of gloom
Fled, afar off, the lustre of his feet ;
Our hill he sought, and made the darkness
sweet,
Staying the wand of doom ;
And dear as from the Grail's all-precious sight,
Grace from his presence flowed, and fell on us
as light.

XXVI.

We seemed to live within the soul alone
Of sorrow's silent love the loftier mood ;
The spirit, vibrant to love's perfect tone,
Sang love that was, more subtly understood,
In love to be, renewed ;
And was death hovering there, with shades of
woe,
Round that dear head the sullen frosts con-
fine ? —
Dear hands, dear lips, dear eyes, I knew
thee mine,
Mine, mine, where'er I go !
The Hour was dead ; we rose, we took our
ways,
Forever lost to sight through all the exiled days.

XXVII.

O Song, move softly through the laureled lyre,
O melancholy music breathing woe ;
With strains that trembling loose love's wild
desire,
And waft it to its peace, through sorrow go,
With ocean pauses, slow !
Strike nobler notes, O laden as thou art,
That die not on the ear with dying tones ;
Oh, touch the finer chords man's nature owns
To ease the breaking heart ;
And harmonies that of the soul partake,
Heard in the days of joy, in evil days awake !

XXVIII.

Heavy is exile wheresoe'er it be !

Or where his armored ship's strong bows
divide

Green, empty hollows of the Afric sea,

Or where my broad-browed prairies, wester-
ing wide,

A race of men abide ;

And life in exile is a thing of fears,

A song bereaved of music, a delight

That sorrow's tooth doth feast on, day and
night,

A hope dissolved in tears,

A poem in the dying spirit — aught

Lost to its use and beauty, desolate, idle, naught !

XXIX.

Heavy is exile wheresoe'er it be !

To miss the sense of love from out the days ;

To wake, and work, and tire, nor ever see

Love's glowing eyes suffused with tender
rays —

Darling of human praise !

To lose Love's ministry from out our life,

Nor gentle labor know for dear ones
wrought,

When once Love lorded the thronged ways of
thought,

And quelled the harsh world strife ;

To feel the hungering spirit slowly stilled,

While hours and months and years the barren
seasons build.

XXX.

Ever to watch, like an unfriended guest,
The sun rise up and lead the days through
heaven,
The silent days, on to the flaming west,
The unrecorded days, to darkness given,
Unloved, unwept, unshriven :
With our great mother, Earth, to live alone ;
To clasp in silence Wisdom's moveless knees ;
To fix dumb eyes, that know fate's whelm-
ing seas,
On her eternal throne ;
While better seems it, were the soul sunk deep
In life's death-mantled pool, sealed in oblivious
sleep !

XXXI.

"Alas," I cried, beneath the sun-bright sky,
"What profits it to search what Athens
says —
To heap a little learning ere we die,
Blind pilgrims, walk the world's deserted
ways,
And lose the living days ;
To cheat sad memory's self with storied woes ;
To summon up sweet visions out of books
Wherein old poets have enshrined love's
looks ;
To seek in pain repose ;
Oh, cup of bitterness he too must taste,
Shut in his homeless ship upon the salt sea-
waste !"

XXXII.

What though o'er him the tropic sunset bloom,
With hyacinthine hues and sanguine dyes,
And down the central deep's profoundest gloom
Soft blossoms, fallen from the wreathèd skies,
The seas imparadise ?
With light immingling, colors, dipped in May,
Through multitudinous changes still endure —
Orange and unimagined emeralds pure
Drift through the softened day ;
“ Alas,” he whispers, “ and art thou not nigh ?
Earth reaches now her height of beauty ere I
die.”

XXXIII.

And I give answer, — “ Would that he were
here !
Three halos, crescent-horned, of purest grain,
In shadowless keen ether burning clear,
In morn's blue eastern depths, a glory, reign
Burn brighter, burn, and wane ;
Never to us,” I whisper, “ by that strand
Stepped morn, so diademed upon the sea ;
Sweet wanderer, joyous shall thy roaming be
Across this wind-swept land !
Urge on thy western flight and die in bliss !
On those unsheltered waves his temples didst
thou kiss.”

XXXIV.

Brief now his voyaging is o'er those far seas,
By shoal and reef that the lost mariner
mock,
By lands of palm that nurse the poisoned
breeze,
And pillared isles whose foam-girt bases rock
With the tornado's shock ;
The branding suns smite down on glassy waves ;
They sink ; on high strange stars malignant
roll,
The regents of the pale, untraveled pole,
Whose coasts no mortal braves :
Why will he on? — Come back, O bleeding
heart !
O stricken soul, return ! Death hunteth where
thou art.

XXXV.

Eager as sea-birds from their bonds set free,
He sought the ancient harbors of his home ;
The Southern Cross fell in the frozen sea,
And stars of gladness, washed in northern
foam,
His boyhood heavens upclomb ;
Once more beneath the tender spring he drinks
The fountains of his youth for which he
yearned ;
The beauty of the shore, like love returned,
Deep in his spirit sinks ;
The violets linger, wide the laurels bloom —
Alas, the flowering earth is his eternal tomb !

XXXVI.

Moan, melancholy Ocean, he is dead
In whom thou hadst thy life, thy throbbing
joy!

Our woe, O melancholy Ocean, shed
In music round thy ever-strangered boy,
Whom the blind deeps destroy!

Waken, dark pines ! that ruinous eclipse
Hath broke the tender league of musing
youth,
And shut love's insights and the hopes of
truth

Within his parted lips :

I take, ay me, no welcome from his hands —
He comes not through the wood, nor down the
shadowy sands.

XXXVII.

From him the lone sun doth withhold his light ;
To him lorn eve her western star denies ;
But oh, a lovelier world hath sunk in night,
Its music-breathing fields, its dreaming
skies,

Dark in his darkened eyes ;
The rapturous element is still, in him,
And all of nature that can perish, dead ;
Oblivion gathers o'er his obscure head ;

Death binds him, face and limb ;
Earth-sundered soul, no beauty now he knows,
Nor sense nor act of love sweetens his long
repose.

XXXVIII.

On crag and beach I hear his threnody ;
I touch the myrtles clinging round his
grave ;
But weak is all that severs him from me,
Faint and far off, although my heart will
crave
The old response he gave ;
No, not the moaning waves nor sighing pines
Persuade my soul of loss, nor blinding
tears —
I love him, I shall love through lonely years,
Where'er my life declines ;
I lean my head down to the flowerless sod —
I feel his shepherding as when on earth he trod.

XXXIX.

Mortality sways not, while heaven shall last,
The starry years that were when he was
mine ;
Death blots not out a fair-recorded past,
Whose meanings deeper are than men divine,
Who write it, line by line ;
The years of noble life are pledges deep,
That bind futurity our souls to friend ;
Woe cannot cancel them, nor far time end
The privilege they keep ;
They live — their light still blessèd where it
leads,
Their hoarded music loosed, pure song, in perfect
deeds.

XL.

Yea, he to whom Love was as God is dead ;
Cold, mute, and dark, he unresponsive
lies ;
A joyless form, the kindling presence fled,
The spirit faded from his wistful eyes ;
No more will he arise !
Yet not in vain was our adoring trust,
Our deep-vowed fealty, our service done ;
To finer issues love that was lives on,
Nor moulders into dust :
Of Love, the Giver, still my song must be,
The Victor, Love, repeat, whose grace descends
on me.

XLI.

Love blends with mine the spirit I deplore,
Like music in sweet verse that lasts for
aye ;
While yet we wandered by our native shore,
He sent the blessings for which all men pray,
That cannot pass away ;
He wrought with ministries of star and flower
And the gray sea, to build our lives secure ;
He made the sources of the spirit pure,
And with truth lent us power ;
And him to me He gave — and lo, his gift
Is changeless, and doth now my soul from death
uplift.

XLII.

On deepest night arisen, the morning star
Trembles across the wide, unquiet sea,
And heavenward springs, with influence felt
afar —
The world's new hope he leads, the day to be,
The life that waits for me ;
Speed on, glad star, and golden be thy flight,
Inviolable, serene, the waters o'er !
Fear not the eclipsing west, O born to soar,
And, dying, die in light !
Bring, bring the morning with her tides of
song,
Her floods of amber air, breaking earth's heights
along.

XLIII.

Beauty abides, nor suffers mortal change,
Eternal refuge of the orphaned mind ;
Where'er a lonely wanderer, I range,
The tender flowers shall my woes unbind,
The grass to me be kind ;
And lovely shapes innumerable shall throng
On sea and prairie, soft as children's eyes ;
Morn shall awake me with her glad sur-
prise ;
The stars shall hear my song ;
And heaven shall I see, whate'er my road,
Steadfast, eternal, light's impregnable abode.

XLIV.

Love, too, abides, and smiles at savage death,
And swifter speeds his might and shall endure ;
The secret flame, the unimagined breath,
That lives in all things beautiful and pure,
Invincibly secure ;
In Him creation hath its glorious birth,
Subsists, rejoices, moves prophetic on,
Till that dim goal of all things shall be won
Men yearn for through the earth ;
Voices that pass we are of Him, the Song,
Whose harmonies the winds, the stars, the seas,
prolong.

XLV.

Break, surging sea, about the lovely shore !
O dimly heaving plains, through darkness sweep !
Thy restless waves, with morning stars roofed
o'er,
Their incommunicable secret keep,
Impenetrable deep !
The eldest years on time's oblivious verge
Saw thee through tempest-weltering night
uplift
Great, mountainous continents amid thy
drift,
And their tall peaks submerge ;
The vast, abysmal, wandering fields moved on,
Whelming the wasteful wreck of the old world
undone.

XLVI.

And still round mortal shores thy billows roll,
And shall through long, long ages yet unborn ;
Lone splendor of the sense-illumined soul,
Eternal moaning of the spirit lorn,
By strokes of loss outworn ;
Thy terrors image our blind mortal state,
Dark with impending doom and whirling
woe,
And monsters in thy bosom come and go,
And death is thy fell mate ;
Ah yet, through sun and storm, gray ocean, roll,
Love clasps thy mighty tides in his profound
control.

XLVII.

Surge on, thy melancholy is not doom !
Surge, O wan sea, into the golden day !
The morn is breathing off thy purple gloom,
The isles lift up their promise, dim and gray,
Love holds his dauntless sway !
Thy ripples kiss the shore with lips of foam,
Thy waves are dawning soft — the winds
blow free !
Keep thou the eternal watch, O dear, dear
sea,
Those far lands I must roam !
Lo, 't is the sunrise — and the sphered stars
move,
Singing unseen, like silent thoughts through si-
lent love.

AGATHON

THE CHARACTERS.

EROS, *the god of Desire.*

DIOTIMA, *the prophetess of Mantinea.*

AGATHON, *the poet.*

PHANTASM.

URANIA, *unseen.*

AGATHON

SCENE I.

Before DIOTIMA'S cave. EROS enters.

EROS.

Between the gods who live and mortal men
I am the Intercessor, Eros called,
Fathered in heaven, but earth did mother me ;
Whence is my nature mixed of opposites,
Unquenchable desire, want absolute,
And is near neighbor unto human fate.
The edict of Necessity besides
Bids own that kinship ; for I come not home
Except my errand done, which ever is
To break the mystery of love to men,
Freeing themselves and me : not without me
Find they the Immortals ; without them my
wings
Blade not, nor from the gleaming shoulder break,
But by the warmth of love those plumes un-
sheathe ;
Wherefore I ever speed to win men's hearts.
I bear the gifts of all the gods to men ;
The bright Promethean fire burns from my hand,

And from it falls Demeter's holy corn ;
Poseidon's horse, Athene's olive-tree,
The plough, the ship, the sceptre, and the lyre
I give, and only from my favor live
All art and use and ornament of life ;
And whom I meet, with whatsoever gift
He wills in his desire I charge his heart.
The most, low-eyed and basely covetous,
Scramble in shameful packs for Plutus' hoard,
To gild their bosoms with a little gold,
But leave unfurnished all that lies within ;
And those who flaunt them in a purple cloak,
And on bright honor fasten greedy eyes,
Are like unmindful what they most should mind.
The king who wolfs it in the precious flock
Forgets the heavenly leasing of his throne ;
The warrior flaming in his woundless arms
Forgets their forging in the fiery mount ;
The victor whose green leaves o'erprize his brows
Forgets the sacred tree they budded on ;
Oblivious, the crammed steward, of his lord ;
The artist, of the beam whence Iris glows ;
The sculptor, of the form within the stone ;
The poet, of the very breath he draws ;
Users of heavenly trust, unmindful all.
They waste my gifts ; I gave them not from
earth
To nourish life alone, but from the gods
Who fashioned them to foster the young soul
In reverence, gratitude, and humbleness.

Yet some, whose eyes were more divinely touched
In that long-remembered world whence souls set
forth,

Discern the holy meaning of the gift,
Which who receives aright receives the god.
The rest esteem it as a thing their own
And common, and neglect to know the gods ;
And me, their messenger, they thrust without ;
And here I wander in the ways of men,
Hungry and poor, and begging for my bread ;
And oft my feet print blood what time I leave
Inhospitable, hard, and kindless doors.
But where some noble soul makes his abode,
And bids me enter in and lodge with him,
Beautiful am I as the gods in heaven ;
His thatch, though lowly, unto them is known,
The rushes of his floor are loved of men,
And who live there behold me as I am.
One such I seek for now, the flower of Greece,
Young Agathon ; to men hereafter known
(If I but thrive as I have hope to do)
More than her athlete's olive-cinctured brows,
Wrestler, or runner, or swift charioteer,
His cherished name endears her memory.
A spirit of joy he is, to beauty vowed,
Made to be loved, and every sluggish sense
In him is amorous and passionate.
Whence danger is ; therefore I seek him out,
So with pure thought and awe of things divine
To touch his soul that he partake the gods.

Now here he comes with that wise prophetess
Who reared his youthful wisdom ; I, awhile,
Will stand and mark them ; sweet is their dis-
course.

[EROS retires.

DIOTIMA and AGATHON enter, and seat themselves near the
cave.

DIOTIMA.

What robs thee, Agathon, of thy delight,
That thou art fallen in grave and silent ways,
Nor longer wilt divide thy breast with me ?

AGATHON.

I would obey the gods, but see not how.

DIOTIMA.

Hast thou forgotten ? But youth ever fears,
And, like the fledgeling on the low nest's edge,
Thinks not how instant heaven receives its wings
And bears them up unseen. The reed once knew
Thy boyish warble ; long the lyre expects
When thou shalt touch Apollo's waiting strings,
Thy name be golden on the lips of men.
Not idly do the gods bestow their gifts.

AGATHON.

Long silent hangs the lyre, silent my heart.
I cannot sing ; I am too much betrayed
By this too fickle world that robbeth me.
Beauty herself hath fed me on despair ;

And the deep change which doth infect all things
Lessons the soul in death, by her eyes taught
More than by gross decay. Change, change is
here !

Still seems the region as the land I loved —
Seems, but is not ; something hath fallen be-
tween,

Strangeness and severance that the exile feels
Returning to his haunts from roving years ;
No stay for him is there ; he turns and goes ;
For he has robbed his father's quiet fields
Of nature's sweet horizons ; nevermore
The sky shall rest upon the hills for him ;
His bounds are of the soul ; his rims of heaven
The visions which his wayward eyes have caught ;
And what that gleam hath whispered to his
heart,

He cannot all forget. This have I learned
From the revolving hours, and fear it much,
And hide it in my breast, as wise men do,
Lest truth should prove contagion to the world.
Woe be to us, to us alone the woe !
The solitude in loveliest places felt,
The heart estranged from earth, but undivine,
The soul aware of that which heaven withholds —
Poets whose eyes the goddess lights and blinds
To be than mortals more, but less than gods !

DIOTIMA.

Hath beauty so bereaved thee, nor love crowned ?

AGATHON.

Thou knowest it, because thou smilest so ;
Yet pity in that smile confession makes
Of thoughts not unacquainted with my own.
I do remember 't was on such a night
As spreads this silver silence on the earth
On the sea-cape I watched the brooding wave ;
Only the moon my meditation shared,
Nor any sound save of the voiceful deep
Among the white crags of my solitude ;
I saw its loveliness, and sighed to see ;
And stretching out my palms to the bright air,
" Wherefore art thou so beautiful, my life ? "
I cried ; and knew in heaven a subtle change,
Celestial fading, and the pale approach
Of morning in the east ; and all my thoughts
Fled thence, as from the gray dawn fled the
stars.
The time was disenchanted, not my soul ;
And oft on some clear height, some curving
shore,
From beauty's momentary trance I woke
As from another world ; flown was the light
That wooed me to such sweet oblivion,
But not from memory flown ; still must I mourn
That every lovely thing escapes the heart
Even in the moment of its cherishing.
O young regret that still will turn desire !
For Nature wounds and orphans while she
charms

Her dearest lover ; no perfection hers,
And no continuance ; change, forever change !
Stars shine where morning was, morn dims the
stars ;
Spring follows spring, and all our autumns roll
Morrow on morrow mourning yesterday ;
So mutable is this dissolving sphere ;
Aloft and under — change, forever change !
And we like sailors on the inconstant deep —
The moon-driven rack, the rout of wind-swept
waves,
Are earth and heaven ; the whole world slips
below.

DIOTIMA.

Truth is not given as pearls, my Agathon.
There is a light within, and that must shine
Before the soul can see ; o'er Nature's world,
The flux and all the ruin of her sway,
Is the eternal ; there the gods abide.

AGATHON.

The gods are hard to seek, but sure they are.
I have not yet my boyhood so unlearned
But with my soul I keep some privacy ;
Such as each spirit owns what time it wakes
And broods and ponders on what things must be
To match its nature ; then what thoughts were
mine !
Desire and dream were undiscovered then !
I rode the dark-ribbed waves, Poseidon's son ;

The ample ether kissed me, sprung from Zeus ;
Apollo wrapt me in his golden beams
Like some proud elder brother ; as a star
Upon the unregarded edge of heaven
Knows not his brethren of the crowded host,
Before their beauty timorous, yet feels
His isolate nature one with theirs divine,
So my young spirit felt beyond the sense
Something at one with it that made the world
Its shining element — oh, wherefore bright
Unless the gods, making such glad proclaim,
Would break their secrecy with Nature's tongues,
And unprofaned do borrow of the soul
Some sweet forewarnings ? — upon this I mused,
When morning flashed on great Athene's spear,
Pacing within her temple. On one hand
The violet landscape through the columns
glowed —

Ægina and the olive-coasted gulf
Empurpling to the far Corinthian gleam ;
Ilissus reed-beloved ; Hymettus flowering ;
On white Pentelicus the cloud-hung pines !
At every step more fair with lovelier change
The scene passed by, in those white columns
framed,

Porches of heaven ; upon the other side
Was I o'ershadowed by the eternal frieze,
'That only seemed to move, but ever stayed,
Horsemen and maidens in the marble march,
Athene's people, bearing evermore

Praise to Athene ; beautiful they stood
Before her coming, mixed with forms divine —
Men worthy to be gods, gods to be men ;
And waking from my trance, I saw them shine,
Nor knew the change from the eternal world.

DIOTIMA.

'T is the god's doing : oh, follow, follow there !
Create what thou desirest, Agathon.
Cling not to Nature ; of eternity
Some glimpses live that counsel the divine
In the brief shadows of this mortal being.
The light that fills the temple thence proceeds ;
And all the Phidian art and mastery
Is but the spirit bringing like the gods
The light it shines by ; only it creates
And truly fashions ; Nature's works decay ;
It hath a higher and immortal craft ;
It is the parent of eternal form.
Not in the sphere the song that moves it sings,
But in the soul ; 't is Nature's element,
Her shaping principle, her other frame,
Locking old Chaos in the rhyme of law ;
Its influence exceeds this sensual reach ;
It doth invest the very gods with charm ;
Such deity resides within the soul.
Oh, wert thou Orpheus, or the shepherd boy
Apollo loved amid his Thracian flocks,
Thy lyre must from thyself bring harmony,
Whose unlocked music builds the world divine.

AGATHON.

One must be born again to breathe that world.

DIOTIMA.

Not once, but many times the soul is born
Before the mortal body wastes away
That it inhabits ; it is born in sense,
And like a thing of Nature in what is
Lives momentary ; born in memory next,
In time's dark shadow and eclipse it builds
The insubstantial world where Nature hath
Her only immortality ; nor long
Consents to tarry with that second death,
And to eternize loss ; but, risen aloft,
Is in imagination born, whose throe
Is Nature's dissolution. Nature dies
In uttering the ideal ; earth below
Is stubble, stars the refuse of the thought,
That works in time and death, denying both
And all the world of change, and winnows
thence

The inviolable and perfect element,
And sees the gods afar. But more remains,
This but the darkness dreaming in the mind
And increate creation ; for the soul
Works not its dream ; yet through belief it may
If it believe ; such premonition hath
The quick eternal nature in it lodged —
Immortal travail, thoughts that at their birth
Have touches of necessity, and shape

Themselves the life to come ; in faith 't is born ;
In what shall be it breathes, till that last change
When it shall lay its mortal nature off,
In what eternal is, eternal live.

AGATHON.

Oh, eloquent and noble as desire
Thy doctrine is, charming as melody ;
Beyond the reach of thought we follow it —
Whither, oh, whither ?

DIOTIMA.

Here repose thyself
Upon the flinty rock, the dreamer's couch ;
For oft in dreams the gods do visit us —
Or what seem dreams — and then we wake and
find
Only the ideal has reality.

[DIOTIMA enters the cave, AGATHON sleeps.]

EROS comes forward singing. AGATHON wakes.

When love in the faint heart trembles,
And the eyes with tears are wet,
Oh, tell me what resembles
Thee, young Regret ?
Violets with dewdrops drooping,
Lilies o'erfull of gold,
Roses in June rains stooping,
That weep for the cold,
Are like thee, young Regret.

Bloom, violets, lilies and roses !
But what, young Desire,
Like thee, when love discloses
Thy heart of fire ?
The wild swan unreturning,
The eagle alone with the sun,
The long-winged storm-gulls burning
Seaward when day is done,
Are like thee, young Desire.

AGATHON.

Who art thou that dost echo on thy lips
The unspoken heart that pains with silent
throb
And thoughts ineffable the aching side ?

EROS.

A wanderer who sings from land to land ;
A single night he lodges where he sings,
And goes ere morning. Subtle is the song
And sweet ; which, if thy heart shall entertain,
'Tis destiny, eternal joy or woe.

AGATHON.

There is a princely pleading in thy looks,
Yet doth this fair-demeanored courtesy
Show with a borrowed favor, as if a god,
With lowly bending of his attributes
And gentle usage of humility,
Should be a suppliant. So Apollo once
Among the herdsmen came, but godlike sang.

EROS.

A god I am, though mortal now I seem.

AGATHON.

I have heard tales of gods who mixed with
men

When men were heroes and divinely sprung ;
But whether by compulsion of strict fate
Or by corruption of our long descent,
The way is lost, and scarce may Hermes' self
Retrace his golden sandals' gleaming track
To guide us hence, whence all the gods are gone.

EROS.

Not gone from thee or any mortal man
Who trusts them, though of pride-enboldened
eyes

They suffer not the near and curious gaze ;
But whom they love they leave not uninspired.
I am their messenger, and joy I bring.
Long have I sought, and loved thee ere I saw ;
Now take my heart of longing to thy breast ;
Suffer my leading : I alone lead true,
And strip the ambush on the paths of peril,
And hedge the flowery way with innocence.
Eros I am, the wooer of men's hearts.
Unclasp thy lips, yield me thy close embrace ;
So shall thy thoughts once more to heaven
climb,
Their music linger here, the joy of men.

AGATHON.

Take my poor friending, such as man may give
Whose only having is a human heart ;
This be thy pillow and thy breast my guard,
Both loyal lovers till the world shall end !
For thou dost seem all mortal, and dost crave
An equal bond ; and far that journey lies
(So strong is prescience here), and long, alas,
Hath that young trust that was about my heart
Flown forth, the bird of roaming, through the
world —

Oft lost in heaven, oft fluttering back to earth,
Builds in the morn and nests in darkening waves,
The tired wing not vain, nor vain the song.
And now my soul must follow after it,
Going with thee ; with thee needs must I go ;
For had one planet launched our lives at birth,
And had one sun harnessed our golden days,
And one dear memory shrined our jewels up,
Thou couldst not more prevail. Oh, thou hast
ta'en

My heart into thy breast ; my faith lies there,
And I must follow !

Thy kisses make me faint,
And, tremulously sweet, ambrosial flame
Steals in my blood, with heavenly vigor bright.
Upon what stream shall this high passion slake ?
Not sun-kissed wine that bursts the blooded grape,
Cold Castaly, nor any nectared draught
That whispers Hebe's secret, shall dull this pain,

Nor any dark-leaved herb of melancholy
Lull it to sleep.

EROS.

There is a fount more clear
Than gave Narcissus to himself, more pure
Than on Tiresias flashed Athene's form,
And softer to the touch than Venus' bath.
If thou canst win unto that crystal brook,
And if but once thy lips kiss that bright flow,
Was never Beauty's paragon more blessed,
Nor Wisdom's lover so by her desired,
Nor darling Adon to the goddess dear.
While this sweet passion sorrows in thy breast
Unto that heavenly fount thou 'rt each day nigh;
There shalt thou learn the mystery of thyself,
How thou art mortal to become a god.
But now the night wears on, and long the way.

AGATHON.

How short a time thou givest to my love !

EROS.

Nor long, nor short ; but when I go from thee
The interval is all ; against that hour
Whisper thy heart into my breast to-night,
And I in turn will treasure mine in thee.

[They enter the cave together.]

SCENE II.

DIOTIMA'S cave within. AGATHON and EROS enter.

AGATHON.

How thou hast stolen within my heart! even
there,

Sweet fabler, fable on, with myth and tale
That thronged before the eyes of poets gone!
Oh, only once to breathe young Attie air,
Cithæron rove, or Ida's slumber know,
A guiltless Paris by Ænone's side!
Dream thou, my heart! for Love so made our
frame

And shut his empire in a maid's white arms,
And in a woman's kiss his sovereignty.
For this Poseidon hath his trident bowed;
For this great Zeus let the leashed thunder sleep
And the bird drowse beside the empty throne;
For this did Enna blossom, and with strewn
spring

Love's footprints bud in hell; even but for this
Did Dian's self lay her white bow aside
And still a thousand hymns of sanctity!
Love comes in youth, and in the wakeful heart
Delight begins, soft as Aurora's breath
Fretting the silver waves, and dimly sweet
As stir of birds in branches of the dawn.
So soft, so sweet, thy touches round my heart.
Oh, fable, fable on!

EROS.

I fable not,

But as the sense is fashioned sees the mind,
And as the tongue is languaged hears the ear,
And as the heart is chambered lives the soul ;
Illusion binds us ! *[The scene darkens.]*

Alas, he hears me not,
And by the darkening of the way I know
Anteros, him, my brother, born with me,
Who will contest for this most noble prize.
His bright enchantment oft my image steals
And silences my voice ; and power is his ;
Whatever loveliness doth dwell in sense
Ministers to him, many gentle thoughts,
Fair shapes, forever beautiful to man,
And dear with tenderness that touches most
Pure hearts and young. Look down, sweet
heaven, now,
And nearer bend thy light, and shine within !

[The scene brightens, disclosing, as the two advance, what seems a lake under the cave's high-vaulted rock.]

AGATHON.

Darkness itself doth change ; and in my breast
Expectancy doth like a spirit sit
And helms me on ; and deep within my heart
Is such unrest, that sweetens as it grows,
Excess makes nature faint. Now might I hear
The music of the bright Sicilian reef,
Caught over heaving seas by mariners lost,

The sea-child's harp of joy ; or whatso else
Is storied in the tales of mortal love,
Of dragon-damsels in the woodland met,
Or river-maidens in their golden hair.
The dark way flames ; the gross and threatening
rock

As the fair element doth softly burn
With violet rays, whose stealing lambency
Subdues these awful ledges up aloft,
Melting with darkness there ; and, isled below,
This chasm of radiance, this bloom of light,
This purple fragment of crag-shadowed seas
Where Naiads slumber ! Grottoes 'neath the
wave,

Where the unbodied spirit of the air
Laves his blue lustre in the sunless stream,
Dissolve such hues ; such still ethereal tints
Within their sapphire caves the glaciers hush,
Light's mountain hermitage ; and, soft-embarked,
What vision pulses on the brightening air ? —

[The PHANTASM appears floating upon the lake.]

How fair she lies within the purple shell,
Couched in the halo of a golden mist
That drops its pale light o'er her flowing limbs !

The PHANTASM.

'Tis sweet to roam ; oh, sweet in breaking
dawns
To speak with Light, the pilgrim beautiful ;
To hear and follow the earth's roaming soul !

The wingèd winds forsake their craggy nests ;
The singing birds take flight and glow in air ;
The pale mists slip their golden anchorage ;
The white clouds lead them on ; for all the gates
Of heaven stand open. Who would linger then ?
The sweetest roamer is a boy's young heart ;
Sweet is his roaming, for his heart is young.
O youngest Roamer, Hesper shuts the day,
White Hesper folded in the rose of eve ;
The still cloud floats, and kissed by twilight
sleeps ;
The mists drop down, and near the mountain
moor ;
And mute the bird's throat swells with slumber
now ;
And now the wild winds to their eyries cling.
The youth divine, — where now lays he his head ?
The sea roves on, and rove the awful stars,
Unalterable as when the young gods woke
And alien gazed upon the mystery
That hopes not nor remembers, with strange
eyes ;
And he, too, gazes, and his heart still roves.
Ah, dark he roams whom sea and stars waft on
To voyage and venture, and to peril all,
Still wandering with the silver-footed waves,
Still coursing with the globes of fiery flight,
A mortal he, but they eternal are.
Now where for him shall end the darkening
search,

Whose feet are bound with sandals of the dust?
The waste desire be his, and sightless fate:
Him light shall not revisit; late he knows
The love that mates with heaven weds in the
grave.

O youngest Roamer, wonderful is joy,
The rose in bloom that out of darkness springs,
The lily folded to the wave of life,
The lotus on the stream's dark passion borne;
'T is hidden far from dawn, and shut from eve;
The shore wave never kissed; the starless bower;
Ah, fortunate he roams who roameth there,
Who finds the happy covert and lies down,
And hears the laughter gurgling in the fount,
And feels the dreamy light imbathe his limbs.
No more he roams; he roams no more, no more.

AGATHON.

How sweet a freight of beauty lieth here!
And like a god I hover over it.
So Bacchus hung where Ariadne lay;
So Ariadne unto Bacchus' arms
Gave her white breasts with upward streaming
eyes.

And me, though mortal, the swift flame devours,
And winds with sparkles of immortal heat
In my quick veins, and finds sweet pasture there.
Alas, her parted lips, how still they smile!
Her soft, immobile face, her calling gaze!
Now from me fall the whole world's memory,

And hang henceforth, my thoughts, your starlight
here !

What art thou, — speak ! — like Aphrodite
lying,

In mystery clad and raiment of desire ?

Yet speak not ; so thy silence is more sweet

Even than thy song, I would not have thee speak.

Still as the light that streams from thee, gaze on,

Sunning thy treasures in thy tresses' gold !

Oh, thou art lovely, maiden, thou art fair,

But to be loved is more than to be fair.

Lift up thy eyes to mine, look with the soul,

And in light reach me !

*[The PHANTASM reveals itself. Agathon starts back,
and the PHANTASM changes, sinking, as the cave
darkens.]*

'T is not thee, not thee !

It is not thee I serve ! O thou one face

That art the sweetness of my thousand dreams,

Beam on me, and uncharm these hoodless orbs !

Ah, base, base, base ! I saw the nether fire

Dilated glow, with expectation ripe,

The brutish spark ! O Eros, art thou gone ?

Didst thou not mark it, like a meteor globed,

Glance down the blue rift and low-eddyng gleam

Deep-whirled ? And in its fiery womb I saw

The twisted serpent ringing woe obscene,

And far it lit the pitchy ways of hell !

Alas, that horror ! Eros, Eros, Eros —

I cannot find thee.

[AGATHON falls.]

EROS sings.

In waste places of the night
Joy once wandered out of light,
And when he parted thence on high
The Desolation heard her first-born's cry ;
Yet another birth was nigh,
Hell-engendered, lean and scant,
In the starvèd womb of Want.
Eros, born the elder, I ;
Anteros, he ; at one same birth
Nourished at the breasts of Dearth.
Oft our pathways cross on earth,
Though we seek a different goal,
For the way lies through the soul.
Oft he wrestles, might and main,
To break the palm-branch in my hand ;
In the torch-race oft doth strain
To quench in dust my burning brand ;
But my strength from heaven derives,
Victor stays, howe'er he strives.

Another fortune with the sons of men
His hazardous encounter hath ;
Safer the Lernæan den,
Or old Scylla's toothèd wrath,
To wayfarer or helmsman of the wave ;
So many thousands find in him the grave.
By avenues of soft approach,
And fair delights to high-placed fortune due,
Upon prosperity doth he encroach ;
Seeming all sympathy and sorrow true,

With wretchedness its fallen pride doth rue,
And some poor betterment as falsely show ;
But all in general wreck doth ever overthrow.
So fond is man, though seeming wise,
From his own heart to spin fair lies,
And, by himself deluded, worst slavery to endure ;
Nor any truth were now kept bright and pure,
Nor for a single hour
Were man secure
Against that secret, sullen, undermining tide,
But, to my strength allied,
Love stoops from heaven, clad in dismaying
power.

Foolish they are who think him soft.
The Avenger he !
His cloudless throne
Oft sends the thunder down
On mortals ; as when Zeus aloft
Is angered in his heart to see
Some insolent lord to fullness blown —
Instant of the Thunderer aware,
Under his golden seat
The wingèd terror at his feet,
Eagle of god, sun-nurtured, fierce for prey,
Flashes on the storming cloud
With beak thrust out and riding pinions loud ;
Sees, and plunges from the air,
And, darkening the blaze of day,
Swoops the offended law ;
And on the race of men beholding falleth awe.

Or like to him heroic song once saw
Leave his bright station on Olympus' crown,
To Ida coming ; terrible the clang
Of the full quiver on his armèd shoulders rang ;
Terrible the bow-string sang ;
Like night the mighty arrow sprang ;
First on beasts, and then on men ;
Pestilence did the armies pen ;
With funeral pyres
The wide camp smokes and death-choked fires.

Such things the poets feign
Of god-inflicted pain ;
But to the inner eye
Secret that force and nigh ;
In the blood implicate,
In nerve and bone
The burning serpent, in the heart a stone,
Invisible fate
Astonishes, struck with internal rout,
The body's faculties, and puts them out ;
Dries up the vital lamp ;
Dissolves the mind's own harmony ;
Lets madness in, and uncontrolled be ;
Dismantles virtue's hold ;
Uncasts, imperial wreck, reason's large mould ;
And in the soul
Unmints the image of its heavenly stamp ;
Erases and abolishes the whole.
O ruin absolute, and not to be withstood
By the frail mortal brood !

Avenging Love! Oh, terrible
The brightness of thy burning stroke
Illumes the darkness when the victim falls!
One moment on his eyeballs broke
The whole eternal fabric, heaven and hell,
Thy glory, unsearchable,
And oft then first descried
When to the light he died!
Yet not to darkness left,
And utterly bereft,
If any soul be capable of light;
For He, who framed man at His will,
Did in the inward parts distill
Such sensible, ethereal force,
That there immortal sorrows course,
Not fatal, but with issues bright;
Woes of the heart unburdening
That fondly to this mould will cling;
Pangs of the spirit when it dies,
Yet strives on thoughts of heaven to rise.
O one true sacrifice!
Where never incense upward clomb
Of holocaust or hecatomb,
The lone heart shall His secrecy surprise
Far in the unapparent skies.

For who hath once known light within,
And entered on heaven's pilgrimage,
The under-world, whence souls begin,
Shall nevermore his steps engage;
Though oft he suffer pain,

In peril seeming lost,
On darkness tost,
He shall be found again,
Light shall to him return.
So into safety brought,
And hardly taught
That souls most beautiful are framed most stern,
Seeing the black and Stygian flood
Redden, beneath Love's scourge, in seas of blood,
And, livid with lightnings of his flame,
Sink whence it came,
Leaving its wrecks along the mortal shore,
With wiser praise
He shall the pæan raise,
And Love, the Avenger, sing, who saves him, ever-
more.

[AGATHON *wakes.*

AGATHON.

And art thou here? and dost thou love me still,
As when thou didst confide thyself to me?
Then leapt my heart up at thy darling name,
That slipped on that dark air, as slips a star;
But whether more of mystery or of light
It yields, beauty or sorrow has, who knows?
Oh, yet one moment in the darkness here
Bend thy full soul on mine! So lovers' eyes
Gaze on each other lost, and suffer all!

EROS.

The cords of birth do not so strictly bind,
The bonds of Nature are less absolute

Than our communion : be not thou afraid ;
I cannot leave thy side until the soul
That passions in thee gives me to my peace ;
Only through thee I come unto the gods.

AGATHON.

I know how strong are forgèd love's bright links
Where virtue is, and truth, and innocence ;
My heart has no such metal ; and thou, alas,
How near thy eyes see my mortality !

EROS.

Be not distrustful, nor with shame o'ercome
Whom sin o'ercame not ; in thy secrecy,
All bare and open to the god's pure sight,
And naked as the desert to the sun
He every part surveys, there truest known
Where light is most ; for oft dishonored here,
Defeated and given o'er (since wisest men
Discern but little in another's life,
And scarce themselves dare judge), the soul
stands there

In garlanded and sweet-hymned victory,
Lovely, and oft majestic after pain.
It is the fool that judges ; so judge not thou,
But rather from the judgments of high heaven
Bethink thee how to pluck eternal law.
Let not dejection on thy heart take hold
That Nature hath in thee her sure effects,
And beauty wakes desire. Should Daphne's eyes,

Leucothea's arms and clinging white caress,
The arch of Thetis' brows, be made in vain ?
Beauty is universal nature's lure ;
The gods themselves from beauty seek increase ;
The fiery soul is natured like the gods,
And hath like motions, and therein is fixed
Immortal generation : whence in it
Creative passion and divine desire
That suffer not to mate with mortal things,
But beauty equal to eternal date
It seeks, and finds it in the virgin soul.
Love giveth not his flame to rosy cheeks,
Nor to the oratory of bright eyes
Yields his commission up, nor to the lips
That breathe his vows renders his constancy ;
But where the spirit within doth live insphered
In noble thoughts, fair actions, and kind words,
He is enthroned, with mutual hearts conjoined
In virtue, courtesy, and married lives
That so uniting more with heaven unite.
He is not fit to love that knows not this.

AGATHON.

This was the beam that chastened my young eyes
In early visitation found and loved,
And beauty's first surprisal ; loving it,
That love in me conquered the lower love.
Yet something will intrude ; though found at last,
That dear response and union of the soul,
Though held secure against time's disarray,

(So clearer shines the eternal ornament,)
Death snatches all, and bears it underground,
Where weeps Persephone, and at the gates
The golden lute of Orpheus shattered lies.

EROS.

The wisest doctrine darkens near the grave ;
On Nature and thy frame of mystery
Where truth works nearest, ground thy faith the
same.

Nature seeks life — no more ; where vigor is
Beauty implants and joy, that measure life
Flowing and ebbing ; thence her art secretes
The loaded seeds and vessels of her force
Ere falls the prime in ugliness and pain,
Death incomplete, and ashy death at last ;
She with new bursts mocks mutability,
And stays her shifting empire. In fair things
There is another vigor, flowing forth
From heavenly fountains, the glad energy
That broke on chaos, and the outward rush
Of the eternal mind ; and as they share
In this they to the soul are beautiful.
It bendeth not, nor lower will converse
Than with that perfect and eternal being
Which beauty portions ; hence the poet's eye
That mortal sees creates immortally
The hero more than men, not more than man,
The type prophetic ; hence in marble shines
The god, but never down Olympus' slopes

.

Nor in Idalian meadows stepped so proud
In grace, joy, love, beauty, and majesty.
Thus beauty, as the Graces throwing gifts
On Aphrodite make her visible,
Endues immortal substance and unveils
The bright original, in all things bright,
But only in the reason seen divine,
And there adored in present deity.
And dream not this the dreaming of the mind.
The soul hath its own order, and its laws,
Strict in its element as Nature's bond,
Are heavenly regents of its destined course ;
They bend the future to the thing to be,
And in the accomplished hour disburden fate.
Wisdom is but their foretaste ; obeying them,
(And what is virtue but obeying them ?)
Thou leaguest with heaven's will, its nursling
thou,
And of its purposes the choicest part ;
So shall thy soul be grappled round with fate,
And on the centre stayed thy fabric stand.
To trust thyself is half thy victory :
The soul that doubteth, it doth daily die,
Thou knowest ; and clearer proof to thee I bring,
The light and language in thyself o'erheard,
Showing the way and passport to the god.
Thou knowest it the circle of thy wits —
From beauty all things have their origin ;
In virtue permanence ; consummation seek
Only in love ; thy soul the witness is.

AGATHON.

Glimpses at times the heavenly spark in me
Hath shed, nor now first heard I know the soul.
But oh, too feeble faith is, self-derived,
Self-seeking, on the little round of self
Narrowly based ! but rather unto Truth,
As to Parnassus' bare and calling height,
Should leap the bright ascent ; or as the sun,
His burning rays advancing gloriously,
Moves with immeasurable azure sphered
And golden empire of his unbraved beam,
The soul should make the heaven through which
it moves
And in its own light chariot its course.
Is there no other Way ?

EROS.

Another Way there is,
So have I heard ; not yet the gates unlock.
And oh, not thine the praise, dear Mount of Joy,
That heard'st the world's first music ; not by
thee,
Nor o'er thy married peaks, the Way to heaven !
Deep sinks the gulf ; the rushing breath thereof,
O Delphian, had rent thy oracle !
Oh, then, what mortal lips shall frame the word ?
Who dare the cleft ? What god shall he invoke
Save the eternal will that lies on him ?
He bears the burden of man's broken hopes ;
Sorrowing he goes and treads the paths of loss ;

As far as falls the gulf with whirling fate
His soul must follow. Not with him go I,
The heaven-climber ; but one companions him,
Oh, how unlike to me, Divine Desire,
Whose pathway leaves eternal light behind ;
To me, oh, how unlike, Child of the god !
'T is Love himself — so is it noised above —
Shall wear mortality beneath these stars,
And, journeying, that Way of Sorrow show ;
He smooths the dark descent, and goes before.
Not yet He comes.

AGATHON.

A mystery thou speakest
That yet familiar to the heart of man
Seems truth most native to his breast who loves
And knows what Love is. I did praise him once ;
Called him the youngest of the gods ; most blest ;
The tenderest ; the nestler in soft hearts ;
Most just, who neither does nor suffers wrong ;
The bravest, Ares' tamer ; in temperance first,
Who ruleth all desires, all passions quells ;
The best beloved, darling of gods and men.
Before he came in heaven were chains and
wounds,
Revolts, dethronements, mutilations, wrecks,
Old realms defrauded and the new defiled,
Necessity's hard reign ; but he brought in
Sweetness and peace, and in smooth order set
The empire of the gods, and gave them gifts :

The throne to Zeus and to the Muses song ;
Apollo's healing and divining art,
Hephæstus' forge, Athene's loom, thank him ;
Out of his loins is every good thing sprung ;
Inventor and inspirer, wise in works ;
Suggester of fair shapes ; persuasion's lips ;
The poet whose touch makes all men poets be,
And hearts that had no music breathe it forth ;
And fame he gives, making all art beloved.
He fills men with affection, voids their hate ;
He maketh them to meet at friendly feasts,
At sacrifice and dance, the priest, the lord ;
Kindness supplies, unkindness banishes ;
Friendship he gives, and forgives enmity ;
Joy of the good and wonder of the wise,
The gods' amazement ; most desired by those
Who have him not, and precious unto whom
He is their better part ; softness and grace,
Delicacy, luxury, fondness and desire,
His children are ; he 's careful of the good,
But of the evil mindeth not at all ;
In every word and deed, in hope and fear,
The pilot, comrade, helper, saviour, he ;
The glory of the gods, the praise of men,
The leader best and brightest ! in choral march
Let each man in his footsteps following tread,
And honoring him sing sweetly the sweet strain
With which Love charms the souls of gods and
men !

EROS.

Fragrant thy praise is and immortal-hymned ;
This breath of thine, this little golden breath,
When Athens lies behind like Babylon,
Shall be love's censer ! Delphi shall be mute,
Athenes's wisdom oracled in stone
Be shattered ; in another country then
(Though desert now and roaring seas between)
Thou shalt be loved ; such charm the Muses give.
But look lest thou their bright occasions lose.
The poet's heart is a wise counselor ;
Oh — for thou canst — invoke Urania now,
That she through song may yield thee thy de-
sire.

AGATHON *sings*.

Muse of the eternal tune,
O'erheard in Nature's starry rune ;
Whom mortals in themselves discern
By thoughts that from thy fingers burn ;
 And the heart divinely falls
 To native hymns and madrigals !

Thou, the Wisdom of the sphere,
Whom most by inward sight we fear,
Since souls o'erwrought through thee may pierce
The violet-girdled universe ;
 And the truth to us is given
 With the shining 't hath in heaven !

Sacred passion seizes me
Through love of the divinity ;
Oft upon my eyelids stream
Bright visions of thy borrowed beam ;
Hear, and have me in thy grace ;
Thee I implore to see Love's face !

URANIA, *unseen*.

To man's spirit-visioned eye,
As the robeless world doth lie
To the sun when clouds disperse,
Unsheltered lies the universe.
Hoar Nature's solitary heir,
He looks on earth and sea and air ;
Thought's empire-making word he wills,
The great domain responsive thrills ;
Break from the bases of the earth
The fire-scrawled legends of their birth ;
Flash sun and planet, wheel in wheel,
Nor dare the central poise conceal ;
And dateless stars of Chaldee stay
His subtler influence to obey.
The viewless pulses of keen force
Traverse their ethereal course ;
Beneath his eye their films withdraw ;
He sees the essences of law.
What he knows a fragment is
Of what destiny maketh his ;
Even beyond hope's climbing border
Unknown worlds shall Science order ;

Her dominions distance far
The lone ray of the outer star.
Yet to her is set a bound,
Nor words divine by her are found.
Nature will not cast for thee
The starry robe of deity.
Mortal, rack her nerves no more,
Nor in her frame the god explore !
Her tongues of fire forget the word
In star-song nor in sea-chime heard,
Nor on Dodona's sacred breeze.
Go, sift with light the Pleiades ;
And clothe anew the fossil bone ;
Of force, resolve the monotone ;
Weigh, number, chart, infer and sum —
Not from without the god will come.
Never through the senses' portal
Gleamed that Power, of all the source,
The large-libertied Immortal
Who inhabits Fate and Force.
Nature has no path to him,
But rather shows man, dumb and dim,
Back to himself her mazes wind
And laws of things are laws of mind.
He the conscious Being only
Of the world whereon he gazes ;
He the sceptred sovereign lonely
In whose state its glory blazes !
Yet, look home : there shalt thou find,
Orb in orb, eternal mind.

Naught is knowledge but the light
Unsealing thy immortal sight.
Naught is beauty but the eye
Led captive by divinity.
For truth divine is life, not lore,
Creative truth, and evermore
Fashions the object of desire
Through love that breathes the spirit's fire.
It loves, and loving grows more bright,
And, changing to its own delight,
Doth ever in itself express
And image the god's loveliness.
Love beauty, and thy soul grows fair ;
Love wisdom, virtue harbors there ;
Love love, the god thou canst not miss —
Within thy heart his secret is.
The spark within, the self-fed flame,
From those twin hands of blessing came,
That cast the massy earth's blue round
And in man's bosom virtue found.
Thy acre of eternal fate
Is broad enough to bear thy weight ;
Take thou the scope the god doth give,
And fear not from the heart to live !
Behold the sacred words I sing
Are but thy spirit laboring :
So near the nameless mystery lies,
Revealed, though hidden, to thy eyes ;
The vision seen, its form and light
Are only with thy shining bright ;

Unveiling him, I unveil thee,
And bare thy inmost privacy.

[AGATHON, *entranced, sinks as in sleep.*

EROS *sings.*

Trancèd now his eyelids be
Seals of light and secrecy ;
Slumber, poet, and still keep
Golden vigils in thy sleep,
And, waking, bring the world divine
Through thy opening eyes to shine !

Now I leave mortality ;
This dear heart has set me free,
Through the sacred passion burning
That denotes his home-returning,
Where the gods in joy recline,
And the sphere is all divine.
Here I scatter ere I go
Thoughts that in white lilies blow,
Hopes that in sweet violets breathe,
Memory, the starred moss beneath ;
These for Agathon shall be
The woven crown of victory.
But to heaven I ascend,
And better there the soul befriend,
With the glad gods interceding,
Till again my pinions greet
The young hearts that love my leading,
Dear as Hermes' ivory feet
Down the purple ether steering,

To the souls in prison nearing,
With the holy meadow's bloom ;
I shall touch them in the gloom,
And, starlike, from my bending eyes,
The sweet beam of divine surprise
Shall in a moment teach them more
Than all the worlds of light before.

SCENE III.

DIOTIMA's *cave ; dawn without.*

AGATHON *wakes.* DIOTIMA *beside him.*

DIOTIMA.

Canst thou interpret this ?

AGATHON.

O prophetess,
Thou knowest ; this rock was riven in twain,
And over me the glistening purple deep,
Sparkling with starry hosts, began to pale
With morning, and the sleeping vales beneath
Broke into thousand shadows, violet-winged,
That in their motions died, and gleaming hills
Unbosomed their fair slopes unto the east
That molten burned : then from that cloudless
throne

Light issued like a pillar of burning gold
Sea-based ; and Phosphor in the rosy flush
Folded the stars upon the hills of dawn.
New earth, new heavens ! Never land I saw
That promised roving in such pastures sweet
Since through the woods that front the sacred
dawn

I came, and music in my heart was born,
And at my feet broke the deep sea of song.
And One whose presence left the orient bare,
Came ; of the image that my soul had stamped

This was the living and god-motioned form.
O mortal speech, how truth disdaineth thee,
The dark confuser! Beautiful he stood —
The feet that never wandered from the god,
The eyes that yet remembered heavenly light ;
His form advanced still sang his joyful speed ;
And in his hand I marked a laurel branch.
I was o'erawed, and darkly in that morn
I felt the nearer hovering of his plumes ;
He struck me with the laurel, face and lips,
And low upon my spirit borne I heard —
Not silence, nor in words of mortal speech —
“ I am the angel of the god thou wouldst ;
Love am I called, one name in heaven and earth ;
And thee through me He chooses : lift up thy
heart
High as His will whose hope abides in thee ;
Know thou His mercy justifies His choice.”
And sleep a thousandfold had sealed my eyes.
Yet feel I on my cheeks the laurel burn.

DIOTIMA.

The gods have been with thee : obey the gods !



MY COUNTRY



MY COUNTRY



MY COUNTRY

WHO saith that song doth fail ?
Or thinks to bound
Within a little plot of Grecian ground
The sole of mortal things that can avail ?
Olympus was but heaven's gate ;
Not there the strong Light-bringer deigned to
wait ;
But westward o'er the rosy height,
His cloud-sprung coursers trample light ;
And ever westward leans the god above the joy-
ful steeds ;
The light in his eyes is prophecy ; on his lips the
words are deeds ;
On whirls the burning Singer ; earth wakens
where he speeds.
The singing keels that moored great Rome
Silence o'ertakes ; but his Immortal Song,
To which the world-wide fates belong,
Still seeks the fleeing shore and for the gods a
home,
A new Ausonia sings, swells o'er a mightier
foam.
The citadels of Italy
(Oh dear to him is Liberty !)
Chained not to her marble mountains,

Sealed not in her broken fountains,
His bright fire ;
Up the dark North it leapt, the masterless desire :
Nor even the Imperial Isle, the Ocean-State,
Who Time's great order leads, and fastens fate,
Shall keep his speed across the shouting sea ;
Destiny exceeds her scope ;
The hope of man exceeds her hope ;
The regions of the west unfold ;
New ages on the god are rolled ;
The throning years to be,
Of earth's new men the praise,
Rise on him where he stands and bends his dreaming gaze,
And smiles to see the shore night vainly shrouds
Through tracts of ruddy air and darkly-gleaming clouds.

Awake, O Land, and lesser fortunes scorn !
Amid the darkness, by the eastern strand,
Bend down thy ear, and hearken with thy hand ;
He comes who brings to thee eternal morn !
More radiant and fair
Than ever thy mornings were,
Or any morn that ever broke from night
Since the dear star of dawn began his earthly flight !

Oh, whisper to thy clustered isles,
If any rosy promise round them smiles ;
Oh, call to every seaward promontory,
If one of them, perchance, is made the cape of
glory ;

Oh, bid the mountains answer thy inquire,
If any peak be tipped with lonely fire,

A shining name

And station of the wingèd flame

Above the time's desire !

Doubt not, O waiting Land ; for who hath
power

To bar the golden journey of the sun,
Or on time's dial set back the destined hour ?
Doubt not, but oh, thy heart within prepare,
And ripen praise upon thy lips with prayer,
When the bright summons through thy frame
shall run

Of that great day begun !

Then heaven shall search thee with its shafts
of light,

And lay thy coverts and thy fastness bare,
And drag the Serpent from its human lair,
And on its scales the swords of God shall smite,
Wielded aloft by spirits that know to fight,
To find the heart with wounds and not to spare.

O wilderness untried,

If thou dost cherish,

Brought from the old earth's side,

The beasts that perish,

The things that eat the dust and darkly crawl,
And in the heart of nations poison all —
Oh, terrible that brightness will appall,
World-justice hanging o'er thee, and shall fall !
Seize thy spear and grasp thy sword ;
Speak the righteous word ;
And his battle rolling o'er thee,
And his victory flashing round,
Shall drive the cumbering brood before thee,
Free forevermore thy ground ;
Thy great ally,
Leaning from the sky,
Shall twine thy hair with morning and the olive's
warless crown !
O Soil befriending men,
Pluck from the Future's hand her iron pen ;
While yet his coming lingers, oh, stoop down,
And write upon the threshold of thy earth
The word that levels all men in their birth,
And in thy love, and in their spirits' worth !
Be that sign, engraved on thee,
Thy omen and thy destiny !

Look forth, O Land, thy mountain-tops
Glitter ; look, the shadow drops ;
On the warder summits hoary
Bursts the splendor-voicèd story ;
Round the crags of watching rolled
The purple vales of heaven unfold,
And far-shining ridges hang in air —

Northward beam, and to the south the promise
bear.

Unto isle and headland sing it,
O'er the misty Midland fling it,
From a hundred glorious peaks, the Appalachian
gold !

O'er the valley of the thousand rivers,
O'er the sea-horized lakes,
Through heaven's wide gulf the marvelous fire
quivers, -

Myriad-winged, and every dwindling star
o'ertakes ;

On where earth's last ranges listen,
Thunder-peaks that cloud the west
With the flashing signal waken ;
All the tameless Rockies own it —
One great edge of sunrise glisten ;
All the skied Sierras throne it ;
And lone Shasta, high uplifted
O'er the snowy centuries drifted,
Hears, and through his lands is splendor shaken
From the morning's jewel in his crest !

O chosen Land,

God's hand

Doth touch thy spires,
And lights on all thy hills his rousing fires !
O beacon of the nations, lift thy head ;
Firm be thy bases under ;
Now thy earth-might with heaven wed
Beyond hell's hate to sunder !

O Land of Promise, whom all eyes
Have strained through time to see,
Since poets, cradled in the skies,
Flashed prophecy on thee !
O great Atlantis, other world,
That never voyager won,
Though many a shining sail was furled,
Lost in the setting sun !
Joy, joy, joy ! thy destiny hath found thee !
Now the oceans brighten round thee,
To thy heaven-born fate ascending ;
Thou, earth's darling ! thou, the yearning
Of the last hope in her burning,
Who shalt seal her womb forevermore !
Child, whose rosy breath is blending
With the morning's o'er thee bending,
While the chorus, never-ending,
Swells from shore to shore —
Triumph of the peoples, anthem never heard
before !
Thou, the crowner of the ages,
Now the eagle seeks thy hand ;
Poets, statesmen, heroes, sages,
In the long-drawn portals stand !
Well may mount to mount declare thee ;
Ocean unto ocean sound thee ;
To the skies loud hymns upbear thee ;
Earth embrace, and heaven bound thee ;
God hath found thee !
Through the world the tidings pour,

And fill it o'er and o'er,
As the wave of morning fills the long Atlantic
shore ;
Fills, and brims — oh, speed the story ! —
The emerald cup of thy great river-gods ;
Brims, and through the west down golden
sods
To the Pacific rolls ; flood unto flood speaks
glory !

O Fair Land, do thy eyes
Dream paradise ?
Or mortals fields are these, or fallen skies ?
Dost thou not hear Him singing in the
gold
The lofty pæan thy long years unfold,
And joy divine that shines in man's just
praise,
Though yet a while delays
The hour full-orbed, and his unclouded
blaze ?
Of holy hymns and famous deeds
He casts before the deathless seeds ;
He wooes thy dust with rosy rain ;
Of thy sweet months is he so fain ;
Oh, lovelier than the poets told,
Unwreathes his brow to light thy dying
mould !
And from their morning bower, and from their
sunny lair,

Scatters the bloom that springs
On heavenly pastures fair,
And o'er thy bosom flings
The fragrance of his own immortal air !
Nor flowers alone are his, but every fruit
That takes the breath of heaven fed from a dark-
ened root ;
Joy to thy virgin soil that spring shall thrill and
shoot !
Like Love, its coming sweet,
With motions of auroral winds that fleet,
Shadow and music, o'er the new green wheat ;
Thy summer lights the land, thy autumn loads the
sea ;
And still a lovelier year returns to thee ;
Or where the glowing South is white like
wool ;
Or where the sun-spanned ocean of the maize
Broods in the brilliant calm, and lightly
sways ;
Or where by inland seas, forever full,
The golden reservoirs of summer days,
Towers of abundance stand in all thy ways ;
Or further on, where bud and fruit together,
Immortal orchards, star the fadeless weather.
O generous fertility,
Like Love, to all men free !
And ever rolls an ampler year, and heaven grows
ripe in thee !
For nobler yields than these,

O favored Land,
Are whispering with thy breeze —
The tillage of God's hand ;
And though it seem thy own, this fair estate,
(Or fief or freehold, ask of Day and Night)
The Eternal only sows the field of fate,
And o'er thy will doth exercise His right.
Thou canst not groove the soil nor turn the sod
But thou shalt drop therein the seeds of
time ;
Thy labor brings to light the will of God ;
Fair must the harvest be, and stand sublime ;
And when the mellowing year is made complete,
And for the world thou reapest time's in-
crease,
He thrusts His sickle in the falling wheat,
And in thy bursting granaries garners Peace.

Oh, humbly bow thee down,
Blessèd o'er all thou art ;
Earth's plenty in thy crown,
God's Peace within thy heart !
Again, O mighty hymn, begin !
O mount, Virgilian song !
Let be the suffering and the sin ;
Thy years to Love belong !
No Janus-stables on thy soil, nor hoof of Mars's
steeds ;
No ruin smokes ; no war-bolt strikes ; no scar of
battle bleeds ;

But fair as once Athene's height thy marble hill
shall rise,

Where Justice reconciles thy earth, Virtue dis-
arms thy skies!

As splendors of the dawn

Make earthly tapers wan,

Less than a candle's beam

The world's first hope shall gleam

When o'er thy vales and soothèd seas the truce
of time shall stream!

Come! Come! O light divine!

O come, Saturnian morn!

O Land of Peace on whom recline

Ten thousand hopes unborn —

O Beautiful, stand forth, nor sword, nor lance,
Silent wielder of the fates!

War-tamer, striking with thy glance

The thunder from imperial states!

So hard, surpassing war, doth Peace assail;

So far, exceeding hate, doth Love avail;

Now, married to thy sphere,

Blessèd between the nodding poles shall wheel
the earth's Great Year.

O destined Land, unto thy citadel,

What founding fates even now doth peace
compel,

That through the world thy name is sweet
to tell!

O thronèd Freedom, unto thee is brought

Empire ; nor falsehood nor blood-payment
asked ;
Who never through deceit thy ends hast sought,
Nor toiling millions for ambition tasked ;
Unlike the fools who build the throne
On fraud, and wrong, and woe ;
For man at last will take his own,
Nor count the overthrow ;
But far from these is set thy continent,
Nor fears the Revolution in man's rise ;
On laws that with the weal of all consent,
And saving truths that make the people wise :
For thou art founded in the eternal fact
That every man doth greaten with the act
Of freedom ; and doth strengthen with the weight
Of duty ; and diviner moulds his fate,
By sharp experience taught the thing he lacked,
God's pupil ; thy large maxim framed, though
late,
Who masters best himself best serves the State.
This wisdom is thy Corner : next the stone
Of Bounty ; thou hast given all ; thy store,
Free as the air, and broadcast as the light,
Thou flingest ; and the fair and gracious sight,
More rich, doth teach thy sons this happy lore :
That no man lives who takes not priceless gifts
Both of thy substance and thy laws, whereto
He may not plead desert, but holds of thee
A childhood title, shared with all who grew,
His brethren of the hearth ; whence no man lifts

Above the common right his claim ; nor dares
To fence his pastures of the common good ;
For common are thy fields ; common the toil ;
Common the charter of prosperity,
That gives to each that all may blessed be.
This is the very counsel of thy soil.
Therefore if any thrive, mean-souled he spares
The alms he took ; let him not think subdued
The State's first law, that civic rights are strong
But while the fruits of all to all belong ;
Although he heir the fortune of the earth,
Let him not hoard, nor spend it for his mirth,
But match his private means with public worth.
That man in whom the people's riches lie
Is the great citizen, in his country's eye.
Justice, the third great base, that shall secure
To each his earnings, howsoever poor,
From each his duties, howsoever great.
She bids the future for the past atone.
Behold her symbols on the hoary stone —
The awful scales and that war-hammered beam
Which whoso thinks to break doth fondly dream,
Or Czars who tyrannize or mobs that rage ;
These are her charge, and heaven's eternal law.
She from old fountains doth new judgment draw,
Till, word by word, the ancient order swerves
To the true course more nigh ; in every age
A little she creates, but more preserves.
Hope stands the last, a mighty prop of fate.
These thy foundations are, O firm-set State !

And strength is unto thee
More than this masonry
Of common thought ;
Beyond the stars, from the Far City brought.
Pillar and tower
Declare the shaping power,
Massive, severe, sublime,
Of the stern, righteous time,
From sire to son bequeathed, thy eldest dower.
Large-limbed they were, the pioneers,
Cast in the iron mould that fate reveres ;
They could not help but frame the fabric well,
Who squared the stones for heaven's eye to tell ;
Who knew from eld and taught posterity,
That the true workman's only he
Who builds of God's necessity.
Nor yet hath failed the seed of righteousness ;
Still doth the work the awe divine confess,
Conscience within, duty without, express.
Well may thy sons rejoice thee, O proud Land ;
No weakling race of mighty loins is thine,
No spendthrifts of the fathers ; lo, the Arch,
The loyal keystone glorying o'er the march
Of millioned peoples freed ! on every hand
Grows the vast work, and boundless the design.
So in thy children shall thy empire stand,
As in her Cæsars fell Rome's majesty —
O Desolation, be it far from thee !
Forgetting sires and sons to whom were given
The seals of glory and the keys of fate

From Him, whom well they knew the Rock of
State,
Thy centre, and on thy doorposts blazed His
name
Whose plaudit is the substance of all fame,
The sweetness of all hope — forbid it, Heaven!

Shrink not, O Land, beneath that holy fear!
Thou art not mocked of God;
His kingdom is thy conquering sphere,
His will thy ruling rod!
O Harbor of the sea-tossed fates,
The last great mortal Bound;
Cybele, with a hundred States,
A hundred turrets, crowned;
Mother, whose heart divinely holds
Earth's poor within her breast;
World-Shelterer, in whose open folds
The wandering races rest;
Advance, the hour supreme arrives;
O'er Ocean's edge the chariot drives;
The past is done;
Thy orb begun;
Upon the forehead of the world to blaze,
Lighting all times to be with thy own golden
days.

O Land beloved!
My Country, dear, my own!
May the young heart that moved

For the weak words atone ;
The mighty lyre not mine, nor the full breath of
song !

To happier sons shall these belong.
Yet doth the first and lonely voice
Of the dark dawn the heart rejoice,
While still the loud choir sleeps upon the bough ;
And never greater love salutes thy brow
Than his, who seeks thee now.

Alien the sea and salt the foam
Where'er it bears him from his home ;
And when he leaps to land,
A lover treads the strand ;
Precious is every stone ;

No little inch of all the broad domain
But he would stoop to kiss, and end his pain,
Feeling thy lips make merry with his own ;
But oh, his trembling reed too frail

To bear thee Time's All-Hail !
Faint is my heart, and ebbing with the passion of
thy praise !

The poets come who cannot fail ;
Happy are they who sing thy perfect days !
Happy am I who see the long night ended,
In the shadows of the age that bore me,
All the hopes of mankind blending,
Earth awaking, heaven descending,
While the new day steadfastly
Domes the blue deeps over thee !
Happy am I who see the Vision splendid

In the glowing of the dawn before me,
All the grace of heaven blending,
Man arising, Christ descending,
While God's hand in secrecy
Builds thy bright eternity.

SONNETS



SONNETS

TO THOSE WHO REPROVED THE AU- THOR FOR TOO SANGUINE PATRIOTISM

THE riches of a nation are her dead
Whom she hath borne to be her memory
Against her passing, when that time shall be,
And in the Cæsars' tomb she makes her bed ;
And oft of such decay in books I 've read —
Carthage or Venice, who had wealth as we ;
Yet, all too wise for patriots, blame not me !
I know a nation's gold is not man's bread.

But rather from itself the heart infers
That ached when Lincoln died ! those boyish
tears
Still keep my breast untraitored by its fears ;
Farragut, Phillips, Grant — I saw them shine,
Names worthy to have filled a Roman line ;
If I prove false, it is the future errs.

OUR FIRST CENTURY

It cannot be that men who are the seed
Of Washington should miss fame's true ap-
plause ;
Franklin did plan us ; Marshall gave us laws ;
And slow the broad scroll grew a people's creed —
One land and free ! then at our dangerous need,
Time's challenge coming, Lincoln gave it pause,
Upheld the double pillars of the cause,
And dying left them whole — our crowning deed.

Such was the fathering race that made all fast,
Who founded us, and spread from sea to sea
A thousand leagues the zone of liberty,
And built for man this refuge from his past,
Unkinged, unchurched, unsoldiered ; shamed
were we,
Failing the stature that such sires forecast !

TO LEO XIII

THE German tyrant plays thee for his game ;
Italy curbs thee ; France gives little rest ;
And o'er the broad sea dost thou think to tame
God's young plantation in the virgin West ?
Three kingdoms did He sift to find the seed,
And sowed ; then open threw the sea's wide
door ;
And millions came, used but to starve and bleed,
And built the great republic of the poor.

Remember Dover Strait that shore from thee
Whole empires, hidden in the banked-up clouds
Of England's greatness ! Of all lands are we,
But chiefly Northmen ; still their might un-
shrouds
The fates ; dream not their children of this sod
Cease to be freemen when they bow to God !

ON THE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

SHE matched the world in arms against man's
right,
And when the Fates would stay victorious
France,
With her own conquests must they dull her
lance,
And legions worn with fadeless battles smite.
O laughter at the shocks of time, her might
Rejoiced in more than arms! the great ad-
vance
Through Europe of her triple ordinance
Man owes to her. — O Century, born to-night,
Fulfil her glory! Europe still hath slaves,
Scourged by the Turk, mown by the Scythian
car;
Siberia, more rich in heroes' graves
Than the most famous field of glorious war,
Yet waits; and by the bloody Cretan waves
Man suffers hope, and pleads his woe afar.

AT GIBRALTAR

I.

ENGLAND, I stand on thy imperial ground,
Not all a stranger ; as thy bugles blow,
I feel within my blood old battles flow —
The blood whose ancient founts in thee are found.
Still surging dark against the Christian bound
Wide Islam presses ; well its peoples know
Thy heights that watch them wandering below ;
I think how Lucknow heard their gathering sound.

I turn, and meet the cruel, turbaned face.
England, 't is sweet to be so much thy son !
I feel the conqueror in my blood and race ;
Last night Trafalgar awed me, and to-day
Gibraltar wakened ; hark, thy evening gun
Startles the desert over Africa !

AT GIBRALTAR

II.

THOU art the rock of empire, set mid-seas
Between the East and West, that God has
built ;

Advance thy Roman borders where thou wilt,
While run thy armies true with his decrees ;
Law, justice, liberty — great gifts are these ;

Watch that they spread where English blood is
spilt,

Lest, mixed and sullied with his country's guilt,
The soldier's life-stream flow, and Heaven dis-
please !

Two swords there are : one naked, apt to smite,
Thy blade of war ; and, battle-storied, one
Rejoices in the sheath, and hides from light.

American I am ; would wars were done !
Now westward, look, my country bids good-
night —

Peace to the world from ports without a gun !

ITALIAN VOLUNTARIES



ITALIAN VOLUNTARIES

LINES

Now snowy Apennines shining
Should breathe my spirit bare ;
My heart should cease repining
In the rainbow-haunted air ;
But cureless sorrow carries
My heart beyond the sea,
Nor comfort in it tarries
Save thoughts of thee.

The branch of olive shaken
Silters the azure sea ;
Winds in the ilex waken ;
Oh, wert thou here with me,
Gray olive, dark ilex, bright ocean,
The radiant mountains round,
Never for love's devotion
Were sweeter lodging found !

ANECDOTES OF SIENA

I.

IN THE PARK.

ONCE I came to Siena,
 Traveling waywardly ;
I sought not church nor palace ;
 I did not care to see.
In the little park at Siena,
 Her famous ways untrod,
I laid me down in the springtime
 Upon the daisied sod.
New, but not unfamiliar,
 Of my boyhood seemed the scene —
The hillsides of Judæa,
 And Turner's pines between ;
And tenderly the rugged,
 Volcanic rock-lands bare,
Warm in the April weather,
 Slept in the melting air.
'T was April in the valleys ;
 'T was April in the sky ;
And from the tufted locusts
 The sweet scent wandered by ;
But strange to me the sunshine,

And strange the growing grass ;
To the branch that cannot blossom
How cold doth April pass !
As lovers, when love is over,
Remembering seem men dead,
Down on the warm bright daisies,
Earth's lover, I laid my head ;
And whence or why I know not,
At the touch my eyes were dim,
And I knew that these were the daisies
That Keats felt grow o'er him.

II.

SODOMA'S CHRIST SCOURGED.

I SAW in Siena pictures,
Wandering wearily ;
I sought not the names of the masters
Nor the works men care to see ;
But once in a low-ceiled passage
I came on a place of gloom,
Lit here and there with halos
Like saints within the room.
The pure, serene, mild colors
The early artists used
Had made my heart grow softer,
And still on peace I mused.
Sudden I saw the Sufferer,
And my frame was clenched with pain ;

Perchance no throe so noble
Visits my soul again.
Mine were the stripes of the scourging ;
On my thorn-pierced brow blood ran ;
In my breast the deep compassion
Breaking the heart for man.
I drooped with heavy eyelids,
Till evil should have its will ;
On my lips was silence gathered ;
My waiting soul stood still.
I gazed, nor knew I was gazing ;
I trembled, and woke to know
Him whom they worship in heaven
Still walking on earth below.
Once have I borne his sorrows
Beneath the flail of fate !
Once, in the woe of his passion,
I felt the soul grow great !
I turned from my dead Leader ;
I passed the silent door ;
The gray-walled street received me ;
On peace I mused no more.

III.

“ AFTER DAYS OF WAITING.”

AFTER days of waiting,
Rambling still elsewhere,
I took the narrow causeway,
Climbed the broad stone stair ;

Round the angle turning
With unlifted gaze
In the high piazza —
Oh, the wasted days !
There the great cathedral
Came upon my eyes ;
Nevermore may marvel
Bring to me surprise !
In the light of heaven
Builded, heaven's delight,
Never sculptured beauty
Hallowed so my sight !
On the silent curbstone
Long I sat, and gazed,
With the sainted vision
Ever more amazed ;
Rose, and past the curtain
Trod the pictured floor,
Read Siena's story,
Saw her glory's store.
In the high piazza
Once again I turned ;
Clear in heaven's sunlight
Prophet and angel burned.
Still, whene'er that vision
Comes upon my eyes,
I seem to see triumphant
The Resurrection rise.

VICTOR'S BIRD

“SIENA — still she sits upon her crags,
And on the slope the dark-stemmed Mangia
springs,
And o’er the crest the Campanile towers ;
My mother, and the mother of my soul !
For from her face I did not need to roam
To find my heaven ; there every rock aspires.
There once I slept, and woke beneath the stars,
And found within my bosom a snow-white bird,
A waif unknown, and stroked and loved its plumes ;
And ever after was I lightly named
The boy who bore the bird within his breast.
Blind eyes that babbled of the thing of sense,
Of boy and bird, and missed the rhyme of life,
The voice of promise, echo of desire !
For heavenly grace that hath made all things
twain,
Doth but divide them as the hand and lyre
To free the music of their harmony.
There’s naught so lonely in the world of change
But ’t is the prison of these concords sweet
When hearts shall find them ; therefore to the
boy
Trifles are often rich in miracle ;

Doubt not his treasure ; rather doubt thy own.
The finding of the bird was more to me
Than the rich coffer of the earth all gems,
Than Rome's tiara to the shaking brow,
Than continents of gold to voyaging kings ;
My whisper of the yonder world, my thought
Of the far country and the over-seas —
'O whence, O whence,' I asked, and beautiful
It cleft the frowning walls, and entered light,
And came again, the warm sun on its wings,
And clasped with rosy feet my tender hands,
And shared my poverty and brought its heaven.

“The months rolled on and swelled the young
tree's girth ;
The autumn blew and stripped the last year's
vines ;
The stars of winter dropped their shining
strength ;
The wild spring came ; and as the mists of morn
Upon the azure marches far away
Build towers of vantage over distant lands,
So by the spirit's breath my thoughts were driven,
And on the soul's horizons, round and round,
Won on the shining borders of the world
Regions of vision ; evermore the bird
Hung in the morning sky above my heart,
As if I too should follow and fly with it
To morrows without end ; the still noon dreamt,
And unseen armor on the ether clanged

Virgilian music ; and the paths of sleep
Shone with white garments, gleamed with myrtle
crowns

Of youth in triumph bearing boughs of spring ;
Then darkened was the hollow cloud of dream,
And, angel-watched, a glory-lighted face
Shining on heaven through flowers of martyrdom
Filled my faint eyes with peace more sweet than
joy ;

And still the bird in every vision flew
As he would woo me to some world removed,
Forever breaking, lingering, biding nigh,
Till came the Word. 'T was by the marble brook
That jets neglected in the gray-walled cirque
Where slept the Wolf in stone and slept the law ;
Silent, I gazed upon the mightier age
Tombed in those walls austere ; the bird in air
Shadowed the fountain, and a monk passed by
Erasing those spread wings ; and all at once
The poppy-branch struck on my dream-drenched
eyes,

And blackness rolled upon the solid world,
And drowned it ; and there broke a yellow shaft
Like some great rift of sunset smiting through,
And on the mighty beam the bird, full flight,
Came singing out of heaven, songless till then,
A little cluster of rich-warbled notes,
Ever the same, one thrill, and o'er and o'er,
That fell upon my heart like dropping flames,
So strange, it seemed I knew not song before.

I woke ; the music slept within my breast —
And over me the ancient walls leaned down
As with some statue's marble utterance ;
'How fair he comes who brings his country
peace !'

I heard, as plain as winds on olive groves.
'What peace?' I cried, and climbed the strait-
ened ways

To where upon the City's sacred brow,
As to the breath of the Eternal Morn,
The mystic Rose of Christ unfolds its leaves,
The bower of his earthly memory ;
And there I marked the priests go ever in,
Like flies and gnats ; and on me came the Voice :
'Wouldst thou bring peace? Then haste thee ;
now, even now,

The eagles of the Christ fly forth to war !'
The bird was gone — a white and quivering
point,
Breasting the blue, far, far beyond recall
He soared, and bathed in light his new-found
song.

And I arose, and as the torrents pour
In April, and the water-courses rush
To brim the river that roars out to sea,
Desire from all the spirit's heights leaped down.
In wild tumultuous thought and speed to find
The ways of action and the throng of deeds ;
And as, when tempests blow, the winds will
break

8

On flood and forest, and the gathering blast
Louder and longer swells one mighty note,
So, in that hour, one nature-cadenced word
Struck on my soul, and smote its music forth,
Wild as a poet's in his stormy youth ;
And with the night calm fell ; and with the calm
The bird came silent home. For what was I ?
A youth distrusted, unallied, obscure,
In all things poor save that one heavenly gift,
The wingèd heart within my bosom hid ;
And must I loose it to the flashing swords,
And rifle the sweet lodging of my breast,
And bid the bird go sing through Italy
That song of his ? No other deed there was,
No other way but this to give my life !
' *O bella Libertà,*' I caroled out ;
The bird took flight, the throngèd street stood
still ;
' O breath that wakes the hundred lyres of song,
O trump that fills the thousand fields of fame,
O hand of Hope, O seed of Memory,
Planting the future with the past sublime !
O voice that doth proclaim the glorious peace,
O hymn that lifts the jubilee of slaves —
The birth-cry of the nations, earth's new name,
The victory's blazon, Christ's eternal rouse !
Thy faintest whisper quakes beneath the throne,
And echoes in the people's mighty heart,
And gathers to the shout that gives God hail !
O rushing from the sun-struck mountain-tops,

O thunder-zoned, thou banisher of kings,
O sweet thy smile that brings the exile home !'

"The pæan swelled — '*O bella Libertà !*'
I sent from hill to hill the singing word ;
I cherished with my life the song I sang ;
I poured it forth, free as the patriot's blood,
The all I was ; and, lo, my chambered soul
Lived in a thousand nobler lives than mine ;
For he who standeth in the whole world's hope
Is as a magnet ; he shall draw all hearts
To be his shield, all arms to strike his blow.
So round my voice the globe of battle grew,
The war-clash 'gan to murmur, and my lips
Sang to the onset, and death flashing fell.
But evil, that doth cling to all things here,
O'ercame that triumph. Yet, come all again,
I'll say it o'er ; the dearest word of men,
The first to seal the poet's virgin vow,
The last to wing the patriot's breath to heaven,
Is Liberty ; it hath the heart's touch in it,
The pang of sacred deaths, the onward reach
Of old heroic lives ; oh, richly charged —
With virtue's spoils and dear-prized honor
heaped,
And ventures of such make their precious worth
Should purchase heaven, if any ransom's weight
Leveled the beam of that great counterpoise
With even scales aloft ; but 't is not so.
In time's dark field must mortal valor fight

And with the viewless future cope on earth.
Yet the good cause plants virtue in the act ;
'T is blessed ; and so, and most through liberty,
The peopled earth is made the place of souls ;
And sooner shall the little life of man
Cease to be heaven's prologue than his lips
Shall be untreasured of the word of grace
That chased them half-divine. Such thoughts
be mine

Though captived — chained unto the Roman wall,
Where none but priests are free ! Oh, them I
curse,

From blue-veined Venice to white Naples' flush,
Where'er across the square of sun they creep
Through filth of beggars to Christ's open door !
The hearts unransomed by the love of man,
The lips that lie for power and pray for gain,
The practised brains that plot the baser age,
Hunters of liberty the thousand years !
They scourge the nations with the holy Cross,
And poison in the wine the Sacred Wounds,
And of our great Redemption bondage forge !
Where lingers vengeance ? On, ye sleepless
hours !

And Thou, whose long age over them yet rolls —
Harvest this curse among the quiet spheres !

"I know not where they died who loved my song ;
I cannot suffer ; joy is in my heart,
Joy of the far-flown bird, the empty breast.

I die, but him they could not cage for death,
The bird whom I had sent to fly and sing
From snowy Alp to Ætna's rosy cloud ;
He nests within the heart of Italy."

IN THE SQUARE OF ST. PETER'S

How brave with heaven St. Peter's fountain copes,
And sheds the rainbow round, and silvers all !
Man's heart is such a fountain ; so his hopèd
The rainbow shed, and through the rainbow
fall.

NEAR BALÆ

OH, tender are the gods, and deep their scorn,
Who write their wisdom on the child's new
heart !
The temple that saluted them at morn,
Ruined and bare, silent they let depart.

LOVE DELAYED

THE Star that most is mine once did I see ;
No cloud there was ; only the reddened air
Bloomed round it where it smiled, all bright
and fair ;

Then most of all love seemed divine to me.
So pure it shone I could but think of thee ;
So rosily enclasped, yet more must dare ;
“So dost thou shine, my love,” nor could forbear,
“So soft my passion folds thy purity !”

But now I see the western star all gold
Hang o’er the high and gloomy Apennine ;
And there I read my lot more truly told —
The night, the penance, the far journey mine !
Still be thou bright ! — My heart, all dark and
cold,
Suffers no light save what from thee doth shine.

TAORMINA

GARDENS of olive, gardens of almond, gardens of
lemon, down to the shore,
Terrace on terrace, lost in the hollow ravines
where the stony torrents pour ;
Spurs of the mountain-side thrusting above them
rocky capes in the quiet air,
Silvery-green with thorned vegetation, sprawling
lobes of the prickly pear ;
High up, the eagle-nest, small Mola's ruin, cling-
ing and hanging over the fall ;
Nobly the lofty, castle-cragged hill-top, famed
Taormina, looketh o'er all.
Southward the purple Mediterranean rounds the
far shimmering, long-fingered capes :
Twenty sea-leagues has the light traveled ere
out of azure yon headland it shapes ;
Purple the distance, deep indigo under, save by
the beach the emerald floor,
Save just below where, ever emerging, lakes of
mother-of-pearl drift o'er ;
Deep purple northward, over the Straits, as far
as the long Calabrian blue ;
Front more majestic of sea-mountains nowhere is
there uplifted the whole earth through.

Seaward so vast the prospect envelops one half
the broad world, wave and sky ;
Landward the ribbon of hill-slanted orchards
blossoming down from the mountains
high ;
Beautiful, mighty ; — yet ever I leave it, lose
and forget it in yon awful clime,
Ætna, out of the sea-floor raising slowly its long-
skied ridge sublime ;
Heavily snow-capped, girdled with forests, Ætna,
the bosom of frost and fire,
Roughened by lava-floods, bossed and sculptured,
massive, immense, alone, entire ;
Clear are the hundred white-coped craters sunk
in the wrinkled winter there ;
Smoke from the summit cloud-like trailing lessens
and swells and drags on the air ;
Ætna, the snow, the fire, the forest, lightning
and flood and ashy gale ;
Terrible out of thy caverns flowing, the burning
heaven, the dark hot hail !
Ætna, the garden-sweet mother of vineyard,
corn-tilth, and fruits that hang from the
sky ;
Bee-pastured Ætna ; it charms me, it holds me,
it fills me, than life is it more nigh ;
Till into darkness withdrawn, dense darkness ;
and far below from the deep-set shore
Glimmers the long white surf, and uprises the
ancient far-resounding roar.

IN the shadow of Ætna sitting why comes it
back to me —
The cry of dying boyhood beside the northern
sea,
On the hill where the great horizons of life be-
gan for me? —

I.

God dreamt a dream ere the morning woke
Or ever the stars sang out ;
The glory, although it never broke,
Filled heaven with a golden shout.
And when in the North there's a quiver
and beam
Of mystical lights that heavenward stream,
The heart of a boy will dream God's dream.

II.

O Norns, who sit by the pale sea's capes,
Loosen the wonderful shine !
The glamour of God hath a thousand shapes,
And every one divine.

Dartle and listen o'er the blue height ;
Drift and shimmer, flight on flight ;
The heart of a boy is God's delight.

III.

Oh, clamber and weave with the Milky Way
The Rose in the East that sprang,
From star to star, with blossom and spray,
On heaven's gates to hang !
O Vine of the Morning, cling and climb,
Till the stars like birds in your branches
chime !
The heart of a boy is God's springtime.

IV.

'T is Dawn that shadows the glowing roof !
'T is Light with the Dragon strives !
Ah, Night's black warp with the rainbow-woof
The shuttle of Destiny drives.
They swerve and falter, gather and fly,
Wane, and shiver, and slip from the sky—
O Norns, is the heart of a boy God's lie ?

V.

O Childless Ones, would your blind charms
Might seal our darling's eyes !
Dead, with the dead Dawn in his arms,
In the pale north Light lies.

Glimmer and glint, O fallen fire !
The lights of heaven like ghosts expire ;
The heart of a boy is God's desire.

VI.

O dream God dreamt ere the morning woke
Or ever the stars sang out ;
O glory diviner than ever broke,
Of the false, false dawn the shout !
False dawn, false dawn, false dawn —
Alas, when God shall wake !
False dawn, false dawn, false dawn —
Alas, our young mistake !
False dawn, false dawn, false dawn —
O heart betrayed, break, break !

I.

BE God's the Hope ! He built the azure frame ;
He sphered its borders with the walls of flame ;
'T is His, whose hands have made it, glory or
shame.

Be God's the Hope !

II.

The Serpent girds the round of earth and sea ;
The Serpent pastures on the precious tree ;
The Serpent, Lord of Paradise is he.

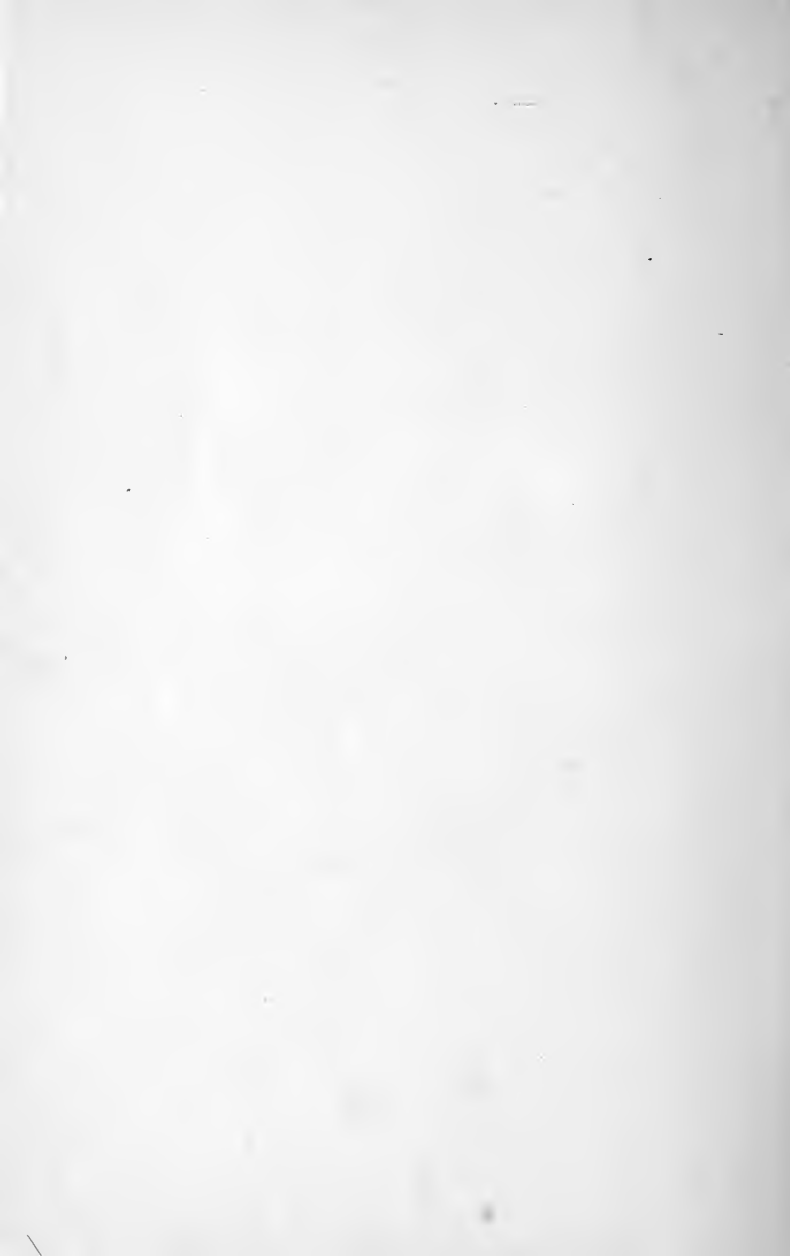
Be God's the Hope !

III.

I thought to slay him. I am vanquishèd.
Heaven needed not my stroke, and I am sped.
Yea, God, thou livest, though thy poor friend be
dead.

Be God's the Hope !







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